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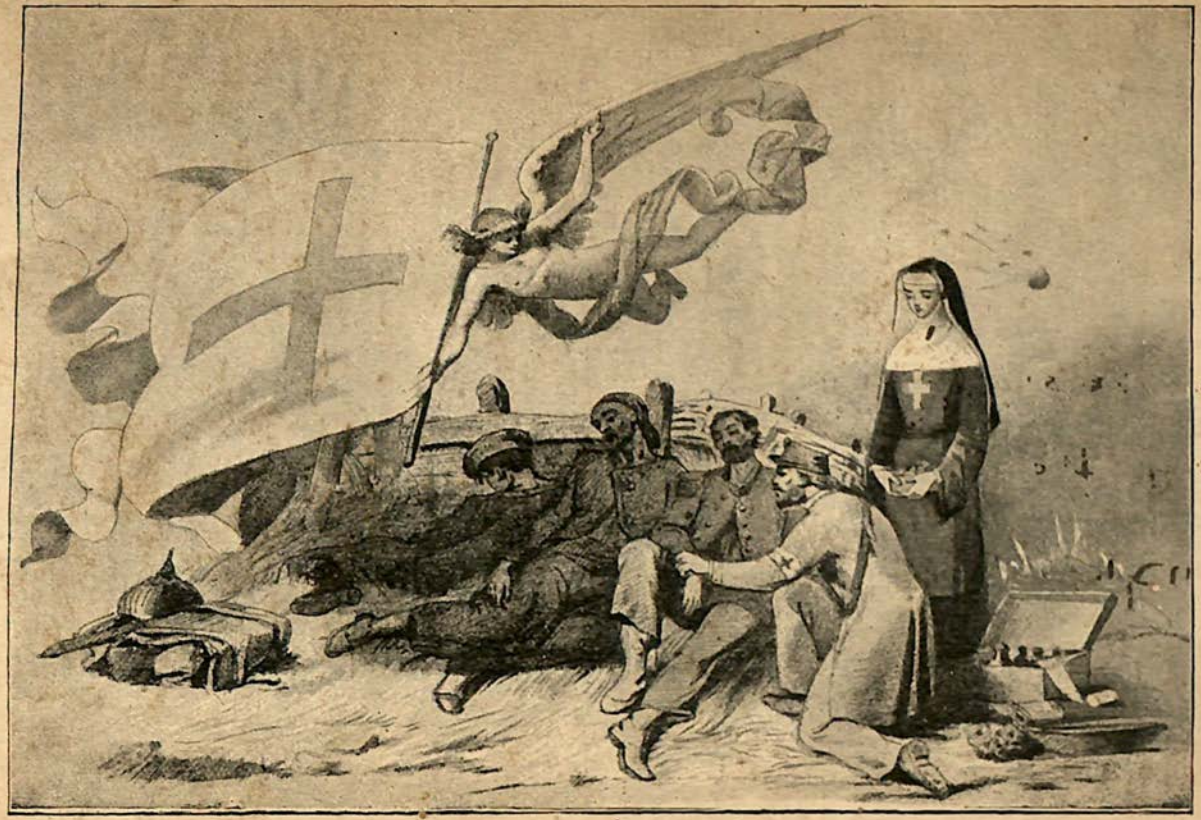
THE

GREAT BATTLES OF 1870

AND

BLOCKADE OF METZ.



Abandonment of the French wounded (night of 16th August). Red Cross Heroes and Heroines.
—*Pages* 94, 310, 311.

THE

GREAT BATTLES OF 1870

AND

BLOCKADE OF METZ.

BY

HENRY BOWLES FRANKLYN, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "NAVIES OF THE MINOR POWERS,"
"CHART OF ENGLISH HISTORY, GENERAL, LEGAL, AND CONSTITUTIONAL,"
"AUSTRIA'S MILITARY FRONTIER," "MILITARY LAW,"
"THE LAWS OF EVIDENCE," ETC. ETC.

(*Formerly University Pupil of Sir Edward Creasy, LL.D.*)

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"Le sort des nations comme une mer profonde
A ses écueils cachés et ses gouffres mouvants;
Aveugle qui ne voit dans les destins du monde
Que le combat des flots sous la lutte des vents."

VICTOR HUGO

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TO

GENERAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,

ETC. ETC.

(ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE BRITISH ARMY),

These Pages

ARE

WITH HIS EXPRESS PERMISSION

Dedicated

BY

THE WRITER,

(WHO SERVED IN THE SAME FORCE WITH HIM, UNDER LORD CLYDE, DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF THE GREAT INDIAN MUTINY OF 1857–58),

HENRY BOWLES FRANKLYN.

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Bat. Inf. or Jager.—Batt. Infantry or Rifles.

Franzosiches Batt.—French Batt.

Deutsches half b.—German half Batt.

Escadron Cav.—Squadron Cavalry.

III. thus.—Number of Army Corps.

Blue line.—Outer blockading line till capitulation.

Red line.—Blockaded line of Army of Metz.

Stellungen at 5 P.M.—Position at 5 P.M.

Blue dotted line in battle (Schlacht) of Noisseville is German position at night of 31st August.

Red dotted line is French position at night.

Steinbran Amanvilliers.—Quarries, with sixty guns near St. Privat.

Black lines.—Railways.

P P, right of Flavigny, and R R, a little below, are the 3d and 4th Divisions of Pomeranians at 5 P.M. marching to the succour of Germans, as these did to the English at same hour at Waterloo.

PREFACE.

He who has been generally considered the greatest Captain, excepting perhaps Hannibal, that the world has ever seen, said, "that it was frequently impossible to understand the details and get at the particulars of any great battle till ten or twelve years after it had been fought." Constant evidence crops up as to what did, or did not occur, and the above must be my first reason for endeavouring to now write the following pages descriptive of the most terrible battles of 1870 and of the Metz Blockade. Secondly, my having been over the ground at the time, and twice again since (once recently), and the permission accorded me of visiting points, and the perusal of rare German and French documents and telegrams. Thirdly, having been formerly a university pupil of Sir Edward Creasy (author of "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," and to which may now be added, 16. Sadowa, 17. Sedan), I am acquainted with his method of description, and of weighing evidence; and, finally, my having had considerable service with our own, and military

training with the Italian Army of the South in 1860–1 (Artillery Division).

Those who ask officers to go all through the volumes of the Prussian staff, must have forgotten the fundamental law, "*That the memory should never be overweighted so as to incapacitate it for vigorous action.*" This feebleness of memory is very humiliating, and has been ignored by teachers and learners. There cannot be any necessity for English readers to know what each individual regiment did, except occasionally, besides which some of the movements in the Staff Reports of the Germans, are directly denied by the French Bureau de Guèrre, and supported by evidence; at other times this is quite in favour of the German accounts, and should in all fairness be gathered from reports on each side, and not as generally from German alone.

That the particulars concerning two of the above battles of the war have not been clearly understood, and that even in some cases the staff reports (heavy reading as they are) have been afterwards on some points found incorrect, there can no longer be any doubt, especially as relates to that great and desperate battle called by the Germans "Mars-la-Tour, or Vionville," and by the French "Rezonville," the different movements and phases of which may be now clearly analysed, although a few of its details may be even yet wanting; and as regards Gravelotte,

the French St. Privat, or, officially, Defence of the Lines of Amanvilliers, certain German assertions are denied, and L'Admirault's corps position before Borny. I shall make no "*ad captandum*" statements, but endeavour to record facts, as there is evidence to prove that they severally occurred; that those who may so far honour me, as to peruse these pages, must accept them only as a jury does from counsel, and form their own tactical or strategical opinions upon them, granting me all the indulgence they can. The general descriptions of battles in English histories have often been so incorrect, that to those who really study Military History such appear absurd; and almost foremost stand those descriptive of the Waterloo campaign, quite unlike those of Hamley and Chesney, both clear and effective, and who, in fact, allow that Waterloo consisted of two distinct battles, and that Napoleon had to do with two distinct armies, as we shall see appears to have been the case at Gravelotte. I must in conclusion remark that unless all the facts be correct, tactical and other conclusions must be wrong, like a house built on a weak foundation; and then proceed with my subject.

HENRY BOWLES FRANKLYN
(*Inns of Court Rifles*).

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, *May* 1887.

German and French authors of the following works referred to are here thanked :—

The Prussian Staff Reports.
Despatches of Marshal Bazaine.
"Capitulation of Metz," by General Coffinières de Nordeck.
"Campaign of 1870," by a Staff Officer.
"The Army of Metz," by Deligny.
Lieutenant-Colonel Fay's "Armeé du Rhin."
"Metz Campaign and Negotiations."
"The Fall of Metz," by Montluisant.
"The 2d Corps Operations," Froissart.
"The Campaign 1870–71," Niemann.
"Campaign of 1870," by an Officer of Army of Rhine.
"History of Campaign," by General Ambert.
Court of Inquiry on Capitulation of Metz and Sedan.
Topographical Notes by an Austrian Staff Officer.
Notes by a Professor of the Polytechnique, and
Major Pratt's Military Academy Notes, &c. &c. &c.

SUGGESTIONS.

For any one wishing to visit the three fields treated of hereafter, I would advise him, after providing himself with good maps, and reading up one of the descriptions, such as the "Military Academy Notes," by Major Pratt, R.A., to go first to Metz, and with good glasses proceed to the top of the Cathedral, where he can for himself trace the various roads and see the villages which played their part in the battles of Borny, Noisseville, Rezonville, and Gravelotte. He will see as well from the above eminence as from St. Quentin and Plappeville. The next day, taking a carriage, proceed round the field of battle of Borny and Noisseville, then drive from there northwards and westwards on the right bank of the Moselle, and cross that river near Olgy, and on to the Thionville road near this. By doing so he will see the situation of part of the blockading line. He should also drive up the Moselle in the other direction as far as Pont-à-Mousson, the headquarters of Prince Frederick Charles, before Frascati. The next day, taking a carriage, proceed round the field of battle of Mars-la-Tour, descending when requisite, and examining the villages and farms like Flavigny and Vionville, returning by Gorze.

The next day let him visit the field of Gravelotte, from the French right to left, that is proceeding

by Amanvilliers and Jaumont, observing the quarries where the great French battery of sixty-four guns covered Canrobert's retreat, Jerusalem, St. Privat, Roncourt, Melancourt, and returning along the line by St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, St. Ail, Habonville, and Verneville along the road to Gravelotte, and descending on foot to the Roman road and into the ravine below St. Hubert and Moscou, where the most terrible fighting of all occurred on August 18, and the final stroke of victory on the arrival of Von Moltke and 2d corps.

In visiting Sedan he will find any of the neighbouring heights, good spots for examining this great field, and it is doubted whether the authorities would allow a private individual to do this from the fortress, which the Bavarians did at the time; or whether it would be allowed at Metz to go up to Plappeville or St. Quentin. In any case one is independent of the permission, by ascending to the points here advised.

NOTE.—This map by a captain of the Prussian Staff I have found best, and very correct. There are but two very slight things to notice.

(1.) The fortified position of St. Hubert commanding the Gravelotte road, as it runs through the defile, is covered in the map by one of the German positions. It is between Point-du-Jour and Moscou, near Hubert F^e^.

(2.) Montois, by the compass, bears a little more westward when standing at St. Privat.—H. B. F.

INTRODUCTION.

On account of the opposite sympathies shown by the English at the time of the war—some being for the Germans, some for the French—it will be better to consider a little the real facts of history as connected with the former boundaries of these two great nations. Those who sympathise with the Fatherland, consider it a great crime to have brought on the war, and so deluged each country with blood; and also that in taking so much territory from the French at the end of the war, and so great an indemnity in money, she was only acting with common justice.

Those with French sympathies consider that the latter were dragged into it by the wishes of a few, and to bolster up the Empire. They also consider just, their wish for future vengeance; and the re-occupation of their provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, of which they have been despoiled by the fortune of war, and the incapacity of their generals. After mature consideration, it is apprehended the reader

will allow, that after all France is really not much worse off, than had she let war alone, except in the loss of her sons, and perhaps in her having been proved not invincible, as she was led to believe, and thus her "*amour-propre*" wounded.

Commencing with 1790–91, the French took possession of Avignon and the province of Venassin, which belonged to the Pope, who by the Peace of Tolentino, was forced by Napoleon to give them up. They then seized on Montbeliard, a Würtemburg principality, and upon a great many parts of Alsace and Lorraine, and those belonging to poor German princes, as for instance, to Nassau, Salm, Baden, Darmstadt, Zweibrücken, and to those of Rhenish ecclesiastical princes; and it is particularly to be noted that all this they did in time of peace, through the constant threatening state of their vast armies; as Louis XIV. had done with Franche-Comté, and Strasburg, and as France had done with Lorraine in 1733; and the reader may perhaps feel surprised in learning that the indemnification for German losses in 1790–91 was estimated at £100,000,000, which, of course, France never paid. Mulhouse, again, was part of the Swiss confederacy, but suffered so continually, that in 1798 the town was forced by famine to surrender to France. By the first Peace of Paris, May 2, 1814 (signed 30th), the frontiers of France were to be the same as on 1st January 1792, thus

allowing her to retain all her annexations, and to which were added parts of Savoy and Nice, besides Monaco, and some districts lying along the Belgian frontier, and this, be it remembered, owing to generous English influence.

By the second Peace of Paris, November 20, 1815, France was limited to the frontiers of the 1st January 1790, thus being obliged to give back Saarbrucken and the country to the north of the river Lauter, except Weissenbourg, together with the before-mentioned parts of Savoy and Nice, and yet being allowed to keep her robberies of 1790 as far as they were within her precincts, Avignon, Venassin, Montbeliard, Mulhouse, and many smaller ones, most of which his Highness, Prince Bismarck, in the interest of the German nation, not unnaturally insisted on keeping by the Peace of Frankfort, May 10, 1871.

We also ought to remember that in 1815, Alsace and Lorraine had been left to France, for no other reason, than because the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Palmerston, did not think it advantageous to strengthen Germany by the addition of these provinces. As France again recently, in 1860, in reality tore Savoy and Nice from the heroes of the Carlo Alberti family, jealous as it was of their motto (*Savoya Sempre Avanti*), and two years later the Val de Travers in Switzerland, it is difficult to allow

why she should be so dissatisfied with the terms accorded to her in 1871. Any impartial study of her history will reveal such a series of acts of violence, that one cannot feel surprised to find her power curbed in the future.

We must conclude these remarks with the very words of her great Captain at the height of his power:—

"With 800,000 men I can oblige all Europe to obey me. I will destroy Russia, and then Spain will easily fall, although assisted by England. My destiny is not yet accomplished. I have but drawn the outline of my picture, which I must fill up: I must make one nation out of all European states, and Paris must be the capital of the world. There must be all over Europe but one legislative code (Napoleon), one Court of Appeal, one currency, and one standard of weights and measures."

From 1793 to 1815 he pursued his career of bloodshed and annexation, taking part in no less than seventy-one pitched battles and sieges. As a general, however, he appears never equalled, except perhaps by Hannibal, whom historians and soldiers seem agreed in allowing to have been the greatest general the world has ever seen.

"For where the fur-clad Corsican, the god
Of modern admiration, safely trod
The rugged paths, and dragged his cannon down
St. Bernard's slopes, and won a great renown;
But honour unto him who first essays
Of peril unexplored the darkest ways.
Well might the Carthagenian at the sight
Of these strange barriers pause, height over height,
Like ramparts raised by Nature to repel
Invasion, and the boldest hopes to quell;
Interminable rising; ridge from ridge
Parted by dizzy chasms, that none could bridge
Save the strong pinioned eagle; jagged steeps,
From which the fiercely foaming torrent leaps
Or rolls the avalanche. No pastime this,
To march in terror o'er the steep abyss
That yawns beneath, upon some narrow ledge
Of slippery rock, or on the cataract's edge;
While grizzly natives who defy pursuit,
Hang threatening on the height, and hurl and shoot
Their savage missilery; and then to bear,
Unhoused, unsheltered, all that sky and air
Can pitilessly inflict, the piercing winds,
The hail that buffets, and the mist that blinds;
Roads lost in darkness, or by storms effaced,
Still to be cut and cleared, retrieved, retraced,
For beast and baggage, over deep defiles
And swampy hollows, wrecks of mountain, piles
Of hurricano-driven snow, that freeze
Under a summer sky. Amidst all these,
Though many a brave one for the wolf and kite
Be left a prey, without a funeral rite,
Without a turf to mark the soldier's grave,
The banners of Imperial Carthage wave."

—*Hannibal on the Alps.*

NOTE.—The using vinegar to disintegrate the rocks is like Diogenes' tub, a myth, and which Pliny tells us was entirely of Gallic origin.

THE GREAT BATTLES

OF

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

AND

BLOCKADE OF METZ, 1870.

CHAPTER I.

Origin and declaration of war—Administration of the two armies—Movements of both towards the frontier—Sketch of, and remarks on, the battles of Weissembourg, Wörth, and Speicheren—The retreat westward of McMahon.

READER, have you ever visited the baths of Ems in Germany? If you have, you may have remarked, in passing from the Kurhaus to the bridge close by, a brass plate let into the earth, on which is the following inscription:—"Den 13ten Juli 1870, Morgens, ein viertel nach 9."

I cannot say whether the statement be totally correct that on the above date the unfortunate Emperor Napoleon III., pushed on by M. Olivier and the Paris war-party, sent a telegram in cypher to Benedetti, the French ambassador, then at Ems, "Brusquez le roi;" but it was at the above spot, and at the time indicated, that the hostile meeting took place between the ambassador and the heroic old King of Prussia, attended by his adjutant (*rê* the

succession of Prince Leopold Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the Spanish throne *); that what amounted to a crime was committed by France, and the fiat went forth which was to deluge her and Germany with blood, to a degree which has been scarcely known in modern times, bringing out the great strategic power of the Count von Moltke, the administrative power of Count von Roon (on the model set up by Scharnhorst), and the military capacity generally of those three great captains in the field,—(1.) The Crown-Prince of Prussia, commanding the third army; (2.) Prince Frederick Charles, commanding the second army; (3.) The Crown-Prince of Saxony, afterwards commanding the army of the Meuse.

At the opening of the Franco-German war, there was a great difference between their two systems; the German consisting of compulsory service, substitution being forbidden, thus ensuring the pick of the population, with short service, big reserves, and plenty of men to rejoin the colours when required, thus rapidly raising the army to a war footing, governed by decentralisation, with a general staff of first-class talent, and a royal treasure for begin-

* The father of the Prince was the Prussian general Charles Anton; the mother of this general a French princess, Marie Antoinette, niece of Joachim Murat, King of Naples, brother-in-law of Napoleon I. Prince Leopold himself married the sister of the King of Portugal, and this Hohenzollern branch is Catholic.

ning the war.* The French system of 1818 and 1832, with substitution by payment, bringing inferior recruits; the reserves, although large, with little organisation or training, and no localisation of units, such as we have many of us remarked on the tin plates like sign-posts at the entrance to German villages; the Intendance not up to its work even so well as it was in 1859 in the Austro-Italian war (although the Emperor thought it was), the army having to be got to the frontier as best it could be. Even those officers (excepting the état-major) who had passed through the colleges had not had the military study and compulsory training of the Germans; and the old saying, "that every French soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack," had led to the belief that the new system of the Art of war did not require incessant study. Such was the state of things in 1870.†

Digressing for a moment, let the reader consider that in England, where there is no conscription except for the militia, and that not adopted, only a certain number of men could be got to the colours of late years; therefore there were two things, at

* Scharnhorst commenced his work after Jena, 1806. In 1810 Napoleon demanded his retirement as Minister, but he kept sending soldiers on leave and taking on conscripts. In 1813 he instituted the Landwehr and Landsturm.

† For what the French army should be, see a document by Napoleon I. in the great Library, Rue de Richlieu, Paris, L.E.F. 195, No. 66.

least, to be considered: (1) to remedy this paucity, and (2) to have men already trained to supply the gaps made in the ranks by losses and sickness in the future; and it is difficult to see how a big reserve could ever be obtained without conscription, except by short service, and by having a part of the population trained as reserve-men. Hence the outcry about old soldiers when short service was introduced by us as in the Continental armies; and yet the reserve force and a good base of supplies (as was lately proved) few people will probably deny to be as essential to success as well-armed battalions.

A reserve force has been also well proved to be the easiest and the most economical way of carrying on a campaign. A good army must, like a Niagara, be fed by its inland seas, in a great measure drawn from the labouring classes, but lately also from useful journeymen in this country. Moreover, ought we to despise healthy boy-soldiers, when we think of Breckenridge's boys from the Military College at Lexington in the war between North and South, whose ages averaged between fourteen and seventeen. These heroes numbered 250; they had marched from Staunton, and bivouacked the night before in rain and mud, and were now called upon to attack a battery supported by infantry. Major Ship, their commander, formed them up and advanced; their colour-bearer fell, but was replaced by another brave

boy; then, under a heavy fire of case, Ship halted them, fixed bayonets, and made a final dash. At this time he was struck, but, still able to stand, called out, "On to the battery!" Gallantly did they respond. Advancing at the run through the deep ground, losing their shoes in the mud, they leapt into the battery, killed the artillerymen, drove back the infantry supports, bayoneted the Colonel himself (who refused to surrender to such apparently insignificant foes), and captured the guns, losing in the charge eighty of their 250. Thus we see that we might have a big reserve composed of what we call old soldiers and boys; for has not nearly every great campaign been victoriously ended by the coming up of the reserve?

In judging of the power of a country, one has to feel that there is a greater power behind, by which it can be constantly augmented. Was it not the men behind the guns of the Germans, fed by those reserves indicated on the tin plates going into the villages (showing corps-d'armée to provinces, brigades to districts, battalions to large parishes, companies to villages), which won those brilliant victories in 1870?

Many of us have voyaged in our great troopers; have we ever descended into that Gehenna on board, and seen the sweating firemen relieved at frequent intervals, the heaped-up coal-bunkers, and heard the

rush of water along the pipes to replenish the gigantic boilers? Is not all this reserve force? It teaches us that our reserve must be gathered and trained before war by short-service soldiers, and arrangements made for continually strengthening it during an entire campaign. Otherwise, although an *ugly word*, we must in the end have conscription; for with regard to our soldiers, Nature is a jealous creditor; she demands compound interest for every loan she makes to us, and if we overdraw without a reserve, our bills will be dishonoured, and the result, without boy-soldiers, or conscription, may be physical bankruptcy in time of war, and to the nation shame and disaster. "Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret."

In preparing for eventualities, the Emperor, with one of his generals, that is to say, Lebœuf (McMahon being the only other who was let into confidence), came to the conclusion that, all things considered, Metz and Strasburg were the two places for the concentration of the corps-d'armée; because, whatever the plan which might be ultimately adopted, the armies of Alsace and Metz would have to combine their movements in order to unite their efforts either in crossing the Rhine or marching northward. In both cases, the army of Chalons would have to be that of the reserve, and keep up the communications of the active army. If the force of circum-

stances obliged the French army to rest on the defensive, the Alsatian troops would retire on the defiles of the Vosges, where the army of Metz would form a junction with them. Strasburg had never appeared to the Emperor a favourable point for crossing, because, having succeeded in that, the army would find itself opposite the defiles of the Black Forest; or, if it followed the right bank of the river and got possession of the line of railway, it would be incumbent on them to besiege and take Rastadt.

The point, therefore, that appeared favourable was Maxau, which lies between the two fortresses of Rastadt and Germeissen, eighteen miles from the former and twelve from the latter, and having one on the right, the other on the left.

The only chance of success for the above plan was to gain on the enemy in rapidity of movement and the taking of Maxau before the above could assemble his troops; but the rapid passage of a great river is a hazardous operation, which seldom succeeds.*

The concentration of the French in Alsace and Metz did not unveil to the enemy the Emperor's projects. It permitted him to assemble seven corps-d'armée, and, with the Emperor at its head, to take

* It succeeded under difficult circumstances in the 1809 campaign, when Napoleon seized the island of Lobau in the Danube, the greatest part of the success before and after Aspern being due to the Imperial Engineers, and the lack of them on the Austrian side to properly fortify the hills in rear of Aspern and Essling.

resolutely the offensive; but for this it is necessary for every corps to be independently in a state of readiness; in fact, it is part of a vast machine, which is paralysed if any part gets out of order. It was necessary that the army of Metz should be complete, and that the corps which was to assemble at Belfort should get to Strasburg in order to reinforce those of Marshal McMahon. It was also necessary that the reserve corps forming at Chalons under Marshal Canrobert should replace in Lorraine those troops which were to enter Germany. Unfortunately, the hopes which had been conceived regarding this plan were not realised.

In place of having 385,000 men in line to oppose about 500,000 united Germans, the army, when the Emperor arrived at Metz, could only reckon, on 25th July, 220,000 men. McMahon only had 40,000 men; and neither the corps of Douai at Belfort nor of Canrobert were ready. The Emperor, therefore, seeing that his plan of the Rhine was impracticable, decided, on account of the impatience of the army, to march at once on the Saar, the following corps being posted thus: 2d, Forbach; 3d, St. Avold; 4th, Boulay; 5th, Saarguemines; Garde Imperiale, at Metz.

The first object of the French not having succeeded through delay, the North and the South German States were able to unite against them, and

we now come to the strength of the two nations as marshalled the one against the other at the commencement of this most desperate struggle.

The forces of united Germany were divided into three distinct armies.

First army.—General von Steinmetz.—7th and 8th corps-d'armée; 1st and 3d cavalry division. Afterwards 1st corps, and 3d division of reserve (the Landwehr of Posen).

Second army.—Prince Frederick Charles.—The Guards, 3d, 4th, 9th, 10th, 12th, corps-d'armée; 5th and 6th cavalry divisions, Afterwards 2d corps and another cavalry division.

The first of these armies had an approximate effective of 130,000, the second an approximate effective of 240,000.

Third army.—The Crown-Prince of Prussia.—1st and 2d corps, the Bavarians; 5th and 11th corps; The Wurtemburg division; The Baden division; and the 4th cavalry division. Afterwards the 6th corps and 2d cavalry division. The approximate effective about 140,000.

The whole three armies, when told, amounted to 465,000 infantry, 58,000 cavalry, and 1578 guns.

Against this force the French could oppose—

1st corps-d'armée, 7th corps, and a large body of cavalry, forming the right wing.

The Guards, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th corps, and a large

body of cavalry, forming the left wing, starting for the frontier.

The 6th corps, forming the reserve.

The cavalry was pushed well in advance, and, counted with Mobiles at Metz, made up about 280,000 men, with 930 guns and mitrailleuses, but afterwards increased by a force from Chalons.

On the 2d August the first collision took place, which was only a demonstration by General Frossard's corps coming from Saarguemines towards Saarbrück, and driving back a weak German detachment. Here the Prince Imperial received his baptism of fire. The next collision was on the 4th August at Weissembourg, when the Crown-Prince with advance-guard surprised General Douai with his division of the 1st corps. The 5th and 6th German corps, following closely, enveloped the French, who beat a retreat at length (but after, however, a gallant resistance) towards Wörth and the Vosges, General Douai being killed. Two days later the French, under McMahon were again encountered in a strong position at the above place and its adjoining woods and villages, when his right wing was again enveloped, rolled up, and fled, the Niederwald, Elsasshausen, and Fröschwiller being all taken. It was at this battle Michel's French cuirassiers made some difficult and desperate charges, and were nearly destroyed.

McMahon then retreated in a westerly direction

through Saverne, Saarbourg, on Luneville, which last place was one of the two towns where all the French supplies were stored, the other being Saarguemines, in place of Metz. He continued his march, without destroying the supplies, or even the bridges, to Neufchâteau, and thence by rail to Chalons, leaving the depôts to fall into the German's hands, and which may have had a great effect on the holding out of Metz afterwards.

On the same day as McMahon was defeated at Wörth, General Kamecke, of Steinmetz's 1st army, imprudently attacked the French at Speicheren. The action was very severe, the Germans being at first overmatched, and the heights a terrible task to take. More and more German divisions of the 3d and 8th corps were pushed up; and on the arrival, finally, of part of the 7th corps, General Frossard retreated on Saarguemines. It was here that the German infantry of one of the divisions took off their boots, tied them together, and carried them while they scaled the heights under the most terrific fire.

I have merely referred to the preceding three encounters, viz., Weissembourg, Wörth, and Speicheren, before arriving at the great fortress of Metz, around which the French now commenced massing their troops, which was by the 13th to the 14th August, or eight days after Wörth and Speicheren.

With Advanced Guard.

CHAPTER II.

Bazaine's appointment to command Army of Rhine—Fighting detail of French and German armies round Metz—Battle of Borny or Colombey.

On the 12th, not on the 13th (or, as has been said by some, 14th), the Emperor handed over the command to Marshal Bazaine. There appears to have been some reason for this, as the feeling generally was that he was incapable of command. The army was composed of the *élite;* 16 divisions of infantry, each numbering 13 battalions of from 800 to 900 men, 510 field-guns, 148 mitrailleuses, several divisions of cavalry, and the Imperial Guard entire. Under him were Marshals Canrobert and Lebœuf, five generals, among whom was General Changarnier, whom we remember had at the outset tendered his sword. There were also 20,000 men besides the above in Metz, formed of 4th battalions, and some of the Guard Mobile, swelling the numbers to an approximate total of 200,000 men.

Against the above were now advancing, southward and westward, the 1st and 2d German armies, under

General Steinmetz and Prince Frederick Charles, the 1st comprising only about 100,000 men, and not yet joined by the 1st corps and 3d division of Kummer, the 2d not yet joined by the 2d corps, consequently much under its supposed strength. It was in communication with the 1st army, and its other flank on the Moselle near Pont-à-Mousson; the whole was under the supreme command of the King of Prussia.

We will now give the fighting detail of the French and German armies around Metz.

COMPOSITION OF THE GERMAN ARMY ROUND METZ, AUGUST 1870.

ORDER OF BATTLE, 13TH AUGUST 1870.

Commander-in-chief—THE KING OF PRUSSIA.
Chief of staff—General von MOLTKE.

1st ARMY.—General STEINMETZ.

1ST CORPS.—GENERAL MANTEUFFEL.

1st Division.—General BENTHEINN.

1st Brigade,	Gen. GAYL.	1st Grenadiers, 41st.	1st battalion of Chasseurs.
2nd „	Gen. FALKENSTEIN.	3d Grenadiers, 43d.	1st Dragoons.

2d Division.—General PRITZETWITZ.

3d Brigade,	Gen. MEMERTY.	4th Grenadiers, 44th.	10th Dragoons.
4th „	Gen. ZGLINITZKI.	5th Grenadiers, 45th.	

Effective—32,000 men, 84 guns.

7TH CORPS.—GENERAL ZASTROW.

13th Division.—General GLÜMER.

25th Brigade, Gen. SACKEN. 13th Infantry, 73d Fusiliers. } 7th battalion of Chasseurs.
26th „ Gen. de GOLTZ. 15th, 55th. } 8th Hussars.

14th Division.—General KAMECKE.

27th Brigade, Gen. FRANÇOIS. 39th Fusiliers, 74th. } 15th Hussars.
28th „ Gen. WOYNA. 53d, 77th. }

Effective—32,000 men, 84 guns.

8TH CORPS.—GENERAL GOEBEN.

15th Division.—General WELTZIEN.

29th Brigade, Gen. WEDEL. 33d Fusiliers, 60th. } 8th battalion of Chasseurs.
30th „ Gen. STRUBBERG. 28th, 67th. } 7th Hussars.

16th Division.—General BARNEKOW.

31st Brigade, Gen. GNEISENAU. 29th, 69th. } 9th Hussars.
32d „ Gen. REX. 40th Fusiliers, 72d. }

Effective—32,000 men, 90 guns.

DIVISIONS OF CAVALRY.

1st Division.—General HARTMANN, I.

1st Brigade, Gen. LÜDERITZ. 2d Cuirassiers, 4th, 9th Uhlans. } Effective—3600 men.
2d „ Gen. BAUMGARTH. 3d Cuirassiers, 8th, 12th Uhlans. }

3d Division.—General GRABEN.

5th Brigade, Gen. MIRUS. 8th Cuirassiers, 7th Uhlans. } Effective—2400 men
7th „ Gen. DOHNA. 5th, 14th Uhlans. }

Effective of 1st Army—102,000 men, 270 guns.

2d ARMY.—Prince FREDERICK CHARLES.

2D CORPS.—GENERAL FRANSECKI.

3d Division.—General HARTMANN, II.

5th Brigade, Gen. ROBLINSKI. 2d Grenadiers, 42d. } 2d battalion of Chasseurs.
6th „ Gen. DECKEN. 14th, 54th. } 3d Dragoons.

4th Division.—General WEYHERN.

7th Brigade, Gen. TROSSEL. 9th Grenadiers, 49th. } 11th Dragoons.
8th „ Gen. KETTLER. 21st, 61st. }

Effective—32,000 men, 90 guns.

3D CORPS.—GENERAL ALVENSLEBEN, II.

5th Division.—General STÜLPNAGEL.

9th Brigade, Gen. DORING. 8th Grenadiers, 48th. } 3d battalion of Chasseurs.
10th „ Gen. SCHWERIN. 12th Grenadiers, 52d. } 12th Dragoons.

6th Division.—General BUDDENBROK.

11th Brigade, Gen. ROTHMALER. 20th, 35th. } 2d Dragoons.
12th „ Gen. BISMARCK. 24th, 64th. }

Effective—32,000 men, 84 guns.

The 4th Corps, ALVENSLEBEN I., lay in observation at Haute-Moselle from 15th to 18th August, then joined the 4th Army (of the Meuse).

9TH CORPS.—GENERAL MANSTEIN.

18th Division.—General WRANGEL.

35th Brigade, Gen. BLUMENTHAL. 36th, 84th. } 9th battalion of Chasseurs.
36th „ Gen. BELOW. 11th Grenadiers, 85th. } 6th Dragoons.

25th Division.—Prince LOUIS OF HESSE.

49th Brigade, Gen. WITTICH. 1st and 2d. } 1st battalion of Chasseurs.
50th „ Gen. LYNCKER. 3rd and 4th. } 2d battalion of Chasseurs.

Cavalry.—25th Brigade, Gen. SCHLOTHEIM. 1st and 2d Regiments of Cavalry.

Effective—30,000 men, 90 guns.

10TH CORPS.—GENERAL VOIGTS-RHETZ.

19th Division.—General SCHWARZKOPPEN.

37th Brigade, Gen. LEHMANN. 78th, 91st. } 9th Dragoons.
38th „ Gen. WEDEL. 16th, 57th. }

20th Division.—General KRANTZ-KOSCHLAU.

39th Brigade, Gen. WOYNA. 56th, 79th. } 10th battalion of Chasseurs.
40th „ Gen. DIRINGSHOFEN. 17th, 92d. } 16th Dragoons.

Effective—32,000 men, 84 guns.

12TH CORPS (SAXONS).—PRINCE ROYAL OF SAXONY.

23d Division.—Prince GEORGE of SAXONY.

4th Brigade, Gen. CRAUSHAAR. 100th, 101st Grenadiers, 108th Fusiliers.
46th „ Gen. MONTBÉ. 102d, 103d Infantry.

24th Division.—General HOLDERBERG.

47th Brigade, Gen. LÉONHARDI. 104th, 105th Infantry. } 12th and 13th battalions
48th „ Gen. SCHULTZ. 106th, 107th Infantry. } of Chasseurs.

Division of Cavalry.—General ZUR-LIPPE.

23d Brigade, Gen. NIDDA. Cavalry of the Guard, 1st Cavalry, 17th Uhlans.
24th „ Gen. PILSACH. 3d Cavalry, 18th Uhlans.

Effective—39,000 men, 96 guns.

After the battle of Gravelotte-Saint-Privat this corps was incorporated with the Army of the Meuse.

PRUSSIAN GUARD.—PRINCE OF WURTEMBERG.

1st Division.—General PAPE.

1st Brigade, Gen. KESSEL. 1st and 3d Regiments of Infantry.
2d „ Gen. MEDEN. 2d and 4th Regiments of Infantry.
} 1 Battalion of Chasseurs.

2d Division.—General BUDRITZKI.

3d Brigade, Gen. KNAPPSTADT. 1st and 3d Grenadiers.
4th „ Gen. BERGER. 2d and 4th Grenadiers.
} Battalion of Tirailleurs.

DIVISION OF CAVALRY.—GENERAL GOLTZ.

1st Brigade, Gen. BRANDENBURG, I. Bodyguard Cuirassiers.
2d „ Prince ALBERT OF PRUSSIA. 1st and 3d Uhlans.
3d „ Gen. BRANDENBURG, II. 1st and 2d Dragoon Guards.

Effective—39,000 men, 90 guns.

After the battle of Gravelotte-Saint-Privat, the guard joined the Army of the Meuse.

DIVISION OF CAVALRY.

5th Division.—General RHEINBABEN.

11th Brigade, Gen. BARBY. 4th Cuirassiers, 13th Uhlans, 19th Dragoons.
12th „ Gen. BREDOW. 7th Cuirassiers, 16th Uhlans, 13th Dragoons.
13th „ Gen. REDERN. 10th, 11th, 17th Hussars.
} Effective—4800 men, 12 guns.

6th Division.—Duke of MECKLENBOURG-SCHWERIN.

14th Brigade, Gen. DIEPENBROICK-GRÜTER. 6th Cuirassiers, 3d and 15th Uhlans.
15th „ Gen. RAUCH. 3d and 16th Hussars.
} Effective—3600 men, 12 guns.

After the battle of Gravelotte-Saint-Privat, these two divisions of cavalry were joined to the Army of the Meuse.

Effective of the 2d Army (without the 4th Corps), 212,400 men, 558 guns.

MIXED DIVISION OF LANDWEHR.—GENERAL KUMMER.

3d Division.—General SENDEN.

5th Brigade, Gen. RUVILLE. 2 regiments combined (6th, 18th, 46th).
6th „ Gen. GILSA. 2 regiments combined (19th, 58th, 59th).
} 8 squadrons of cavalry of the reserve. 1st Dragoons, 3d Hussars.

Brigade of Infantry combined.—19th and 18th Prussian Infantry. 2 regiments of cavalry of the reserve, 5th Uhlans, 2 regiments of heavy cavalry (formerly 7th Uhlans).

This Division was at Metz from the 18th August, and afterwards with Manteuffel.

Effective—22,000 men, 36 guns.

COMPOSITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY.

Commander-in-chief—Marshal BAZAINE.
Chief of staff—General JARRAS.
Commander of Artillery of the Army—General SOLEILLE.
Commander of Engineers and Governor of Metz—General COFFINIÈRES.

2D CORPS.—GENERAL FROSSARD.

1st Division.—General VERGÉ.

1st Brigade, Gen. VALAZÉ. 32d, 55th Regiment of Infantry, 3d battalion of Chasseurs-à-pied.
2d „ Gen. JOLIVET. 76th and 77th.

2d Division.—General BATAILLE.

1st Brigade, Gen. POUGET. 8th, 23d, 12th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. FAUVART-BASTOUL. 66th, 67th.

3d Division.—General LAVAUCOUPET.

1st Brigade, Gen. DOENS. 2d, 63d, 10th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. MICHELER. 24th, 40th.

Division of Cavalry.—General VALABRÈGUE.

1st Brigade, Gen. VALABRÈGUE. 4th, 5th Chasseurs-à-cheval.
2d „ Gen. BACHELIER. 7th, 12th Dragoons.

Brigade.—General LAPASSET (separated from the 5th Corps at Sarreguemines, was annexed to the 2d). 14th Battalion of Chasseurs-à-pied, 84th, 97th, 3d Regiment of Lancers.

Effective of 2d Corps—26,084 men, 4789 horses, 72 guns, and 18 mitrailleuses.

3D CORPS.—MARSHAL LEBŒUF.

1st Division.—General MONTAUDON.

1st Brigade, Gen. ——. 51st, 62d; 18th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. CLINCHANT. 81st, 95th.

2d Division.—General DE CASTAGNY.

1st Brigade, Gen. NAYRAL. 19th, 41st; 15th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. DUPLESSIS. 69th, 90th.

3d Division.—General METMAN.

1st Brigade, Gen. DE POTIER. 7th, 29th; 7th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. ARNANDEAU. 59th, 71st.

4th Division.—General AYMARD.

1st Brigade, Gen. BRAUER. 44th, 60th; 11th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. SANGLÉ-FERRIÈRES. 80th, 85th.

Division of Cavalry.—General CLÉREMBAULT.

1st Brigade, Gen. BRUCHARD, 2d, 3d, 10th Chasseurs-à-cheval.
2d „ Gen. MAUBRANCHER, 2d, 4th Dragoons.
3d „ Gen. INNIAC, 5th, 8th Dragoons.

Effective—39,153 men, 7913 horses, 96 guns, 24 mitrailleuses.

4th CORPS.—GENERAL L'ADMIRAULT.

1st Division.—General DE CISSEY.

1st Brigade, Gen. BRAYER. 1st, 6th; 20th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. GOLBERG. 57th, 73d.

2d Division.—General GRÉNIER.

1st Brigade, Gen. BELLECOURT. 13th, 43d; 5th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. PRADIER. 64th, 98th.

3d Division.—General LORENCEZ.

1st Brigade, Gen. PAJOL. 15th, 33d; 2d battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. BERGER. 54th, 65th.

Division of Cavalry.—General LEGRAND.

1st Brigade, Gen. MONTAIGU. 2d, 7th Hussars.
2d „ Gen. GONDRECOURT. 3d, 11th Dragoons.

Effective—28,942 men, 5631 horses, 72 guns, 18 mitrailleuses.

6TH CORPS.—MARSHAL CANROBERT.

1st Division.—General TIXIER.

1st Brigade, Gen. PÉCHOT. 4th, 10th; 9th battalion of Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. LEROY DE DAIS. 12th, 100th.

2d Division.—General BISSON.

9th of the Line. The 14th, 20th, and 31st Regiments forming this division retreated to Chalons.

3d Division.—General LAFONT DE VILLIERS.

1st Brigade, Gen. SONNAY. 75th, 91st.
2d „ Gen. COLLIN. 93d, 94th.

4th Division.—General LEVASSOR-SORVAL.

1st Brigade, Gen. MARGUENAT. 25th, 26th.
2d „ Gen. CHANALEILLES. 28th, 70th.

The cavalry division of this corps and Engineers and reserve of Artillery could not reach Metz.

Effective—35,414 men, 72 guns.

IMPERIAL GUARD.—General BOURBAKI.

1st Division.—General Deligny.

1st Brigade, Gen. Brincourt. 1st and 2d Voltigeurs.
2d „ Gen. Garnier. 3d and 4th Voltigeurs.

2d Division.—General Picard.

1st Brigade, Gen. Jeanningros. Zouaves and 1st Grenadiers.
2d „ Gen. Poittevin. 2d and 3d Grenadiers.

Division of Cavalry.—General Desvaux.

1st Brigade, Gen. Du Fretay. Guides, Chasseurs.
2d „ Gen. De France. Lancers, Dragoons.
3d. „ Gen. Du Preuil. Cuirassiers, Carabiniers.

Effective—21,949 men, 6635 horses, 60 guns, 12 mitrailleuses.

CAVALRY OF RESERVE.

1st Division.—General Du Barrail.

2d Brigade, Gen. Lajaille. 2d Chasseurs d'Afrique.

3d Division.—General De Forton.

1st Brigade, Gen. Prince Murat. 1st and 9th Dragoons.
2d „ Gen. Gramont. 7th and 10th Cuirassiers.

Effective—5427 men, 5015 horses, 18 guns.

GENERAL RESERVE OF ARTILLERY.—General CANU.

Effective—1054 men, 1210 horses, 96 guns, no mitrailleuses.

We are now arrived at the 14th August, and on that date evidence seems to prove that Bazaine, on account of the disorderly retreat of McMahon, and the necessity of keeping up his communications, and, at all events, there being a chance of the rapid advance of the Germans, determined to retreat towards the plains of Champagne *via* Verdun. Major Pratt, R.A., in his notes on the campaign, suggests that the French did not find out the German advance by

their patrols, yet the Prussians say that Bazaine was well aware of their advance in force, hence his order for retreat. A part of the French army had already commenced this movement as follows:—The French to the east of Metz, retiring by divisions from both flanks, were attacked, but covered by General Decaen. The 4th French corps under General L'Admirault coming up, and half the first Prussian army corps, the engagement became serious and general; it was only hindered by the darkness, and each side claimed the victory.

The French loss was over 3600 men and 200 officers in a very short space of time, among whom was General Decaen himself, who fell mortally wounded. All things considered, the advantage will probably, in the opinion of most military men, be considered with the Germans, not because the French ultimately evacuated the field without molestation, but rather because the Germans had been able temporarily to check their retreat. Bazaine has been frequently blamed for allowing the action. The Germans say that it was perhaps due to a spirit of rivalry on their own side between two German corps, and that General Steinmetz himself could not succeed in stopping the fighting. But all things considered, it would rather seem that the attack was by his own desire, and made expressly when he saw the French crossing the river. The success was recog-

nised by the King, who at night sent the following telegram, 14th Despatch:—

"*From King to Queen.*

"Victorious action near Metz by 1st and 7th army corps; further particulars unknown.

"WILHELM."

"HERVY, *15th August*, 7.30 P.M.

"Returned at three P.M. Advanced guard of 7th corps engaged the French last evening. 1st corps came up to the attack, and a bloody action occurred all along the line. Enemy has been thrown back, and we have advanced up to the glacis of outworks. Neighbourhood of the fortress enabled the enemy to ensure the safety of his wounded. After our own had been cared for, our troops returned to their bivouacs at daybreak. Troops fought with unspeakable bravery. I have seen and thanked them from my heart. The rejoicing was great. I spoke to Generals Steinmetz, Zastrow, Manteuffel, and Göben. Loss over 4000. WILHELM."

It would appear something like the attack at Speicheren of General Kamecke of 1st army over again. If this be really so, the statement that Bazaine should have attacked with his whole army, that some Prussian writers make, would fall to the ground. There seems to be, however, a general

military opinion that L'Admirault's corps should not have been retransported across the Moselle to its right bank, nor the action allowed to have so developed itself at that rather late hour of the day. The general retreat on Verdun having been determined on, this movement was completely covered by Metz; but *per contra*, the troops of L'Admirault were only in the *act* of crossing when he received the demand for succour.

The Battle of Borny, August 14.

As there have been so many opinions relative to the necessity for this, although not reckoned of the same consequence as the other three great battles, it may be better, in the reader's interest, to go a little deeper into what really did occur. At 4 P.M. the 2d corps had in its retreat, with the cavalry and artillery reserve, gained the left bank of the Moselle, passing it at Ile Chambière, when a sharp fire was commenced on the front of the 3d corps at the entrance to the village of Mey on the left, and between Grange-au-Bois and Colombey on the right. The division Grénier of the 4th corps and two division of the 3d corps immediately replied. The action became sharp; the third corps took position in two lines, and the division Grénier sustained in its entirety the fire for some time.

On his side, General Steinmetz, seeing the French

army passing the Moselle, had launched his 7th corps on the 3d French (Decaen), and his 1st corps on the village of Mey, or, at all events, portions of these. Steinmetz's 8th corps (Von Göben) was in reserve at Laquenexy; his two cavalry divisions assisted the movement, while at his extreme left the 28th division (of 9th corps) of the 2d army advanced along the route to Strasburg in order to cover the movements of the six other corps in the environs of Pont-à-Mousson on the Moselle, higher up.

The battle having commenced, became extremely violent on the French right. The 13th division (Glümer of the 7th, Von Zastrow's corps) attacked the divisions Castagny and Metman. On the left the 2d division Pritzelwitz of 1st Manteuffel's corps attacked also General Grénier. On hearing of the fighting, L'Admirault stopped his two divisions, which were close to the river, made them right-about, and brought them up to the support of the division Grénier, a little in rear of, and near the deep hollow of Vautoux. At the same time the 20th battalion of Chasseurs got into the wood of Mey, which the German Jägers were commencing to occupy, and took possession of this. The German attack became a little less violent, but its vigour again recommenced on the arrival in line of the 14th division (Kamecke of 7th corps) and the 1st division (Bentheim of 1st corps). These troops

made most brilliant attacks, especially on the left of the French position, where two charges of the Germans were repulsed at the point of the bayonet.

Marshal Bazaine now arrived, and exercised for the first time his new command. In his despatch he says:—"The retreat of the troops was to commence and be executed by the two wings, and consequently, in the half-circle that they formed before Forts St. Julien and Quenlen, should have fallen back successively, so as to be covered and supported by the fire of Fort Bellecroix. This instruction had not been precisely followed, and the delay brought on the battle of Borny at a point farther from the works than it ought to have been. There was only the division Grénier (forming the rear-guard of L'Admirault's corps), the 3d corps, and the Guard (who were to march the last), when the Germans seized the moment that our troops were for the most part distant to attack those which still rested in their positions. General Decaen had ordered his corps-d'armée to move by echelon, the divisions Montaudon and Castagny retiring first, the divisions Metman and Aylmar continuing facing the enemy, and retaining their position till the other two divisions had got into theirs in rear. These orders were being carried out when the grands-gardes of Montaudon and Castagny were violently attacked, so that one could see that the engagement would

soon become serious. Immediately observing this, I ordered General Decaen to make his dispositions accordingly.

"The division Montaudon rested its right on the road to Strasburg before Grigny, its left on the Bois de Borny, which it occupied in force; the division Metman marched to the plateau to the north of Grange-au-Bois; the division Castagny on its left in rear of Colombey, its left again on the Saarlouis road; finally, the division Aylmar guarded from this road the crests of the ravine stretching in the direction of Vallières.

"All these divisions formed in two lines, and soon the fire extended along the entire front. The Germans were hidden a great deal by the woods, but their presence was revealed by a sharp fire of infantry and artillery. Its intensity in front of Metman and Castagny proved without further doubt that their object was to pierce the centre of the 3d corps and to get possession of the Saarlouis road, which they considered our line of retreat.

"At the same time as this attack, another was made on the division Grénier (of the 4th L'Admirault's corps). He, in order to repulse this, got his right on the village of Mey, his left at the chapel of Salette, and sent a report to this effect to General L'Admirault, who was conducting the crossing of the Moselle by his own corps. He immediately left all his

knapsacks temporarily, and hastened with his two divisions and his artillery of reserve to the heights of St. Julien. The batteries of the division arrived first, and supported Grénier, who was himself rather gaining ground, and they were soon followed by the division Cissey, which got into line on the left, and the fire of which helped to arrest the masses of infantry which had been till then masked. It was the 1st corps (Manteuffel) which had come to succour the 7th, the corps which was first engaged. On hearing of the battle, the Imperial Guard had got under arms, and from the route connecting the two villages of Borny and Vautoux it marched forwards to the rear of the centre of the 3rd corps, while the brigade Brincourt (Voltigeurs) occupied, with the batteries of the division, the hill of the fort of Quenlen to support Decaen's right. The fighting went on thus till night; all the attacks of the enemy, repeated several times, had been repulsed and the French positions maintained. The troops of the first line had to be relieved by those of the second, and it was before this latter that the attacks of the Germans ultimately ceased.

"When they renewed it in the centre, they attempted two turning movements, one on each wing. On the right, the division Montaudon was threatened by two strong columns, which were arrested by the fire of the batteries and the brigade Brincourt. On the

left, a compact mass of infantry tried to come to close quarters and crush it; but General de l'Admirault charged and drove it back at the point of the bayonet. It was then past 8 P.M., and the enemy ceased firing at nightfall, closing up from all sides, and I had no necessity to use the Guard, which now marched to the front.

"I then gave orders for the troops to continue their march to Metz and the Moselle, occupying by echelon the last crests which protect the Strasburg and Saarlouis roads. These movements went on without the slightest interference by the enemy, and in the night the Guard and 3d and 4th corps rejoined on the other bank of the river the troops who had already encamped there."

The engagement had lasted five hours, and been brilliantly sustained on all points. The French losses amounted to 3600 men and 200 officers killed, wounded, and missing. Those of the Prussians are supposed to be nearly 5000. The French had besides three generals *hors de combat*, one of whom, Decaen, died of his wounds. The two French corps-d'armée which had fought encamped till 2 A.M. on the ground they had occupied on the 14th. A captain and a colonel charged with conducting the departure of the troops, after having passed the entire night on the field, walked about freely there on the morning of 15th August, and at 8 P.M. the two corps encamped

near Moulins. At the same hour the 3d division of cavalry of reserve (De Forton), which left Ban St. Martin at half-past 1 P.M., arrived at the heights above Rezonville, and the division Du Barrail, which started at the same hour, arrived at the environs of Doncourt-Conflans.

Napoleon III. left Metz at 2 P.M. on the 14th, and arrived at Longueville, where he passed the night at the house of a retired deputy of the Empire, Colonel Henocque.

At this time the German armies occupied the following positions :—

The 1st and 7th corps remained on the field; the latter was to quit it during the night; the 8th was in reserve at Laquenexy. Of the 2d army, with its head-quarters at Pont-à-Mousson, the 2d corps had arrived at Han-sur-Nied; the 3d at Nomeny; the 4th, *en marche* on Frouard, was to continue it to Marbache, and halt at the Moselle; the 9th at Buchy; the 10th at Pont-à-Mousson; the 12th Saxons at Solgne, on the road from Metz to Strasburg. The 6th division of cavalry, under the Duke of Mecklenburg, covered the movements towards Metz, and the 5th cavalry division, under General Rheinbaben, scouted for the army beyond Thiancourt, and sent on its scouts even to the west of Mars-la-Tour, on the road to Verdun.

The battle at Borny is claimed by the French as a

tactical success, but it is allowed that, as a strategical one, it was with the Germans, because, having arrested the French, this being the object of the fight, and on the 16th having cut the southern road to Verdun, they have a right to claim the above advantage given by the struggle at Borny. All things considered, it appears, as before stated, that Steinmetz did it expressly as soon as he found them crossing, and to give Prince Frederick Charles time to advance on the Verdun route by the 16th; otherwise the 3d and 4th corps would not have been delayed, and would on the 16th have been on the field at the same time as the 2d and 6th corps. Besides, two divisions of these corps would not have had to stay in rear and take no part in the battle.

The number of troops on each side at Borny may be considered perhaps nearly equal. Thus at the commencement the Germans had in the first line two divisions, the 13th and the 2d, nearly 32,000 men. The French had three, viz., Castagny, Montaudon, and Grénier, nearly 30,000 men. In the second period the Germans had two corps, the 1st and 7th, besides the 36th regiment of infantry, which, preceding the 25th division (9th corps), helped with the 1st division of cavalry (Hartmann) in a demonstration on Mercy-les-Metz. These two corps gave an effective of 60,000 men. The 3d and 4th French corps in line at the time, but of which half was held in

reserve, amounted to 83,000 men. Finally, if one counts the forces which were on the ground and ready to take part in the action, there were on the side of the Germans three corps, of which one remained in reserve, that is, the 1st, 7th, and 8th, and two divisions of cavalry, in all 98,000; while on the side of the French there were the 3d and 4th corps and the Imperial Guard (in reserve), or in all 104,000 men.

It would really seem as if General Steinmetz's attack was the commencement of the misfortunes and ultimate breaking up of the great Army of the Rhine.

CHAPTER III.

Retreat of French on Verdun—Topography between Verdun and Metz—Disposition of the two armies up to morning of 16th August—Orders given on both sides.

We now come to the 15th August, the Fête Napoleon, which had always been kept up with great pomp in Paris, and, indeed, for which preparations had this year been made, for it had generally been believed that between 14th July and 15th August some brilliant victory would have been achieved, some of the German columns shattered, and the army on the route to Berlin, according to their war-cry. And how could one blame them for this, when they had been told by a French writer that the army was now invincible since the introduction of arms of precision, and that they would be victorious against double or treble their forces? Things, however, had turned out differently, and no one was in the humour for either fêtes or illuminations. The Emperor was considered unequal to the command-in-chief, which had been transferred to Bazaine. His Majesty now took up his head-quarters on the

high-road at Longueville, near Metz, at the house of Colonel Henocque, and the Marshal accommodated himself as well as he could to the existing state of things. He at once gave directions that his troops, who had been ordered to commence their retrograde movement on the 14th, but were prevented from doing so by the unexpected attack of the Germans on that day, should continue their retreat towards Verdun. This retreat, however, was of a very different nature to what it would have been under other circumstances, owing to the great confusion which prevailed, and was retarded by long halts. In addition to this, the 3d and 4th corps were so much in rear, that it was deemed advisable to allow them to come up in case of attack; and all these delays prevented their progress towards their objective, which under other circumstances they would have accomplished in about twelve hours.

The reader will perhaps now be good enough to take a look at a good map (Prussian or Austrian are generally the best), and consider the topography of the country for a moment to the west of the Moselle.

The high-road from Metz to Verdun runs at first in a direction south by west, owing to the course of the river and the hills on its borders, and along this road three corps had to pass as far as Gravelotte without Bazaine having issued orders in detail, and

for which the commander-in-chief is generally considered responsible. When it, however, approaches Longueville, about two and a half English miles from Metz, it pierces the hilly slopes and takes a direction due west. Four and a half English miles farther on, near the village of Gravelotte, it divides into a northern and southern road (well seen from the summit of Metz Cathedral), which run almost parallel to each other, and generally at a distance of three and a half or four English miles, afterwards gradually approaching each other, and finally joining at Verdun. There is also a third and longer route passing by Woippy, ascending by Saulny the wooded heights of the left bank of the Moselle, then descending by Jerusalem St. Marie-aux-Chenes and Aubonè into the valley of the Orne, and thus ascending through a defile towards Briey. Here the route bifurcates; one branch, running north-west by Longuyon into the valley of Chiers, rejoins the railway and the road from Mezières to Thionville by Sedan and Montmedy; the other branch runs westward to Etain.

Part of Bazaine's forces were marching along one, and part along the other of the two most southern roads, and their advanced guards had orders to push on to about ten miles west of Metz. But even this task could not be performed on that day, for numerous convoys blocked the two roads, and the disorder into

which three army corps had been thrown by participation in the battle of the preceding day caused great delay in the movements of one and all of these, as they could not start as early as directed, nor march quickly enough to complete the distance within the period fixed. In order that their confusion should not be extended to the days about to follow, the Marshal issued orders that the troops should retain those positions which they would occupy on the morning of the 16th August.

Such was the state of affairs in which the five corps of Bazaine found themselves on the above date; part were on the march, part intrenched. Farthest to the front, on the southern road, were the two corps of Frossard and Canrobert, that is, the 2d and 6th. The former had established itself on a height overlooking Flavigny, with its right on the road to Mars-la-Tour, its left watching the ravines towards Gorze. The 6th corps extended nearly from St. Marcel to the same road, on which its left rested. The Voltigeurs of the Guard were near Malmaison, and the Grenadiers facing them opposite Bois-des-Ogons, both covering Gravelotte. The artillery of reserve was in rear of Rezonville. Thus we see they were encamped on both sides of the southernmost road and round this village.

As soon as Bazaine had been informed of the advance of large bodies of the enemy (of which there

seemed now little doubt) in the above direction, he assigned to these corps such positions as enabled them to support each other. The northernmost of the two roads had been given up to the two corps of Lebœuf and L'Admirault; the whole corps of the latter was "*en marche;*" half of the corps Lebœuf was encamped to the north of the road near Verneville, whilst the other half was "*en marche.*" The Imperial Guard, under General Bourbaki, stood in reserve in a fortified position to the west of Gravelotte, where Bazaine had his head-quarters.

I have spoken of the two southern roads into which the one from Metz divides at Gravelotte. The more southern of the two passes by Rezonville, Vionville, and Mars-la-Tour to Verdun, and is the shortest, and both of them are wide and in good condition. On the next southernmost road Bazaine's forces occupied Doncourt, Jarmy, &c., and this position, as above stated, was ordered to be retained on the morning of the 16th. A Prussian writer considers that the Marshal had made up his mind, if possible, to occupy it throughout that day in order to give time to a convoy, despatched by a still longer and more northern route by Briey, to get well in advance, so as to continue at more leisure his route with the main body, which may be computed at 160,000 men. It has been said that Bazaine thought the Germans were still on the right bank of the Moselle; but this

can scarcely have been so, because, on learning of their approach, he had altered Frossard's and Canrobert's positions.

Looking now at the movements of the Germans, we have seen by the royal telegrams that the King on the morning of the 15th reconnoitred the battle-field of the 14th, and finding that the French had evacuated it, the 1st corps of the 1st army under General Manteuffel, and 3d division of cavalry under General Graben, occupied it. The other two corps of this army, viz., the 7th and 8th, under Generals Von Zastrow and Von Göben, and 1st division of cavalry under General Hartmann, were pushed on towards the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson above Metz, crossing that river at three different points. The 3d corps of the 2d army of Prince Frederick Charles under Lieutenant-General Count von Alvensleben II., and the 6th division of cavalry under the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, were sent, however, to Noveant, where a practicable road leads up to Gorze from the Moselle. The 9th corps followed the 3d, and on to Voudiers. The 10th corps had crossed at Pont-à-Mousson under General Von Voigt-Rhetz, together with the 5th division of cavalry under General Rheinbaben, well in advance towards Mars-le-Tour, (where it encountered Forton's brigade of French

* The reader may here refer to the disposing of two and three roads argued by Colonel W. W. Knollys, *Colborne's U. S. Magazine*, January 1886.

cavalry), this last corps, and its accompanying batteries of flying artillery, being the first Germans who entered French territory to the west of the Moselle. The Guard crossed at Dieulouard, under the Prince of Würtemberg; the 12th, under the Prince Royal of Saxony, advanced only to that point; the 2d corps, under General Fransecki, remained at Forbach; the 4th was stopped "*en route*" to Toul and Commercy.

Judging from the above movements of the Germans up to this, the reader's proposition will probably be that they would try to arrest the march of the French between the Moselle and Meuse, and bring on a general action that might be a decisive one. Orders were, in fact, issued for the forward movement to continue at break of day on the 16th, in order for some of the force to gain the table-land to the north-west of Gorze, and part, as we shall see (on account of uncertainty), to push on towards Verdun as a flying column, further reinforced by two more batteries of horse-artillery.

It will be seen with what extreme caution the Germans crossed the Moselle on the 15th, retaining the greater portion of the 2d army on the right bank in case of a movement by Bazaine to the eastward against Steinmetz, who might require support, until the 5th division of cavalry, pushed along the Verdun road, could report something more certain

as to his probable movements, which was not before the evening of the 15th.

The regiments of the 3d corps and 6th division of cavalry did not push on very far after crossing. The 6th division of the 3d corps of infantry under General Buddenbrock marched up as far as the little town of Gorze, where they bivouacked for the night. The 5th division under General Stülpnagel remained in rear; other corps were ordered to approach and prepare for crossing the Moselle on the 17th; the head-quarters of Prince Frederick Charles were fixed at Pont-à-Mousson.

The little town of Gorze, up to which the 3d corps was advancing, is situated nearly due south of the table-land on which are the villages of Vionville, Trouville, and Rezonville. It required only a little farther advance before the hostile masses, which were for the moment hidden from each other's view, must come in sight of each other.

During this time the French army mounted the fatiguing heights of the left bank. The cavalry division of Forton arrived at Mars-la-Tour, encountering there, as before stated, some cavalry of Rheinbaben, eight miles in advance of the corps for which it was scouting. There was a short cannonade, and the Forton division remained where it was till after midday, when it formed at Vionville with the cavalry of the 2d corps under General

Valabrègue, while with regard to the division of Chasseurs d'Afrique of General Barrail, it had got as far as Jarny. On the evening of this day the French army occupied the following positions, viz. :—

The 2d corps, as before stated, was on the road of Rezonville.

The 6th corps stretched from that road between the village of Rezonville and the château of Villars-au-Bois.

The 3d corps, now commanded by Marshal Lebœuf in place of Decaen, wounded at Borny, followed the route from Metz running between Plappeville and St. Quentin, descending by Lessy to Chattel-St.-Germain, and took the road to Verneville, encamping near that village; its 3d division stayed at Maison-des-Planches, near the Thionville gate.

The 4th corps had encamped at Woippy and Devant-les-Ponts; its 3d division, under General Lorencez, between Lessy and Plappeville.

The Guard and reserve artillery and the parks were at Gravelotte, as before stated, at the junction of the two southern roads, and the Emperor was waiting all day with great impatience to be escorted to Etain, fearing to be cut off from the capital.

With great regret, on account of the fatigue of the cavalry, he put off his departure until 4.30 A.M., and sent off his horses and baggage at once under

the escort of the Cent-Gardes. Such was the situation of the French army on the night of the 15th August.

We now return to the Red Prince at Pont-à-Mousson. The following order was issued by him to the two corps to the west of the Moselle at 11 P.M. on the 15th :—

"*Order.*—The 10th army corps will march in a straight line westward from Pont-à-Mousson towards Verdun, under the supposition that the enemy's advanced troops on his retreat may be already approaching that town; the troops will complete more than the half of the distance, and their advanced guards will push on as far as St. Hilaire. Not before they shall have reached that place is it thought possible they can come up with the enemy. The 3d corps, which will have arrived at Gorze, must come up with some of the enemy on the following morning."

Here we must remark the studied intention of the commander to make those under him aware of his plans and opinions, so widely different to the custom pursued by French commanders. As we shall see hereafter, the troops of the 3d corps had to bear the brunt of the fighting on the 16th, one corps against three French, and afterwards three German against five French, the 10th German corps arriving very gradually only, and the French being also reinforced. Only at the end of the afternoon and

in the evening parts of the 8th and 9th corps arrived. The French, as we shall see, were only thrown back after thirteen hours of the most desperate fighting, and, strange to say, however, claiming the victory.

The Germans held their ground, and succeeded in occupying some of the advanced French positions which they had held in the morning, among which was Mars-la-Tour, taken by one o'clock, and the southern road thus cut. We now come to the details of this great battle.

CHAPTER IV.

Battle of Mars-la-Tour, or Vionville, or Rezonville—Losses on each side.

THE day broke forth with a fierce heat at an early hour, and the march along the narrow valley and up the steep ascent to the table-land was most trying and exhausting to the men. Officers and reconnoitring cavalry moved about in front of the advanced guard, and when they had ascended to the heights, from which they could get a view across the fields towards Flavigny and Vionville, the officers with their long field-glasses could make out the French outposts, and in rear of these, large encampments of the enemy. Without delay they at once hastened back and reported matters to the commander, Lieutenant-General the Count von Alvensleben II.

Immediately Lieutenant-General Buddenbrock, commander of the division most advanced, was ordered to get into covered positions on the table-land, for which purpose several woods and some deep depressions in the ground were occupied, and to wait for the approach of the 6th division of cavalry

under the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and this order was given between 7 and 8 A.M.

Hardly an hour had elapsed, when some patrols who had kept sight of the enemy reported that, judging from some of their movements, it seemed probable that they were contemplating a retreat westward. In consequence of, and acting directly on this, orders were given to prepare for immediate attack. The horse-artillery batteries, already in advance, were now pushed forward clear of the woods, and got into position near Trouville; the whole of the infantry and as much cavalry as possible pressed forward on their flank and rear; and at the same time orderlies were sent (owing to the contemplated attack) in a south-westerly direction to where the troops of the 10th corps were on the march.

The cavalry, which was moving in a line more to the north than the other troops of that corps, were first informed, and when the former had already proceeded on their march nearly five English miles beyond Trouville. Somewhat later the infantry learnt the news, and faced about. A report was also sent with all speed to the Red Prince at Pont-à-Mousson. This was—"The French are seen a little to the south of the Verdun road, extending from Trouville beyond Rezonville. The fight is beginning by Buddenbrock's division."

There has been great difference in the statements made as to the time of arrival of reinforcements to the Germans during this furious battle; but it has now been ascertained pretty correctly, and many former accounts seem wrong. However promptly the above orderlies had been sent, yet it is a fact upheld by much evidence that it was as late as about 11.30 A.M. when some horse-artillery batteries and cavalry of the 10th corps arrived in advance near Trouville; and not till the afternoon does it seem that one single infantry brigade under Colonel Lehmann placed itself under the orders of Von Alvensleben.

Meanwhile, the 3d corps alone, and for an hour the division Buddenbrock only, had begun and continued the terrific fighting, but on their first advance the Germans were favoured by the circumstance that they took the enemy by surprise.

One can hardly have an idea (as confessed by the French themselves) of the carelessness of their outposts, especially at a time when Bazaine said that he had been informed of the concentration of German troops to the south of Metz. It is allowed by them as a fact that the approach of the horse-artillery and Prussian cavalry, and the bursting of the shells of the former, awoke them, as it were, from a dream while at breakfast; and it was only a few minutes before, that their outposts in front of Vionville made out the approach of the enemy, and, as a matter of

course, their 3d division of cavalry of reserve under General De Forton at Vionville, as well as that of the 2d corps under General Valabrègue, were thrown back in great confusion, and retreating in haste to the rear of the camp of their corps, they did not re-form until they had reached the rising ground in rear of the village. But the effect of the surprise was only of short duration.

A few minutes later the Prussian division of infantry advancing to the attack only succeeded, after the greatest exertions, and with terrible loss, in driving the French out of some of their advanced positions in front of Vionville and Flavigny, and the Prussian batteries, taking immediate advantage of the infantry success, were able to advance still farther the guns.

In the meantime the French adapted themselves to this change, and the divisions driven back got into new positions on commanding ground near the above villages. All French troops within anything like moderate distance were ordered up in support, and to observe the hollow roads, called ravines, leading to the battlefield.

There appears to be great difference also in the time given of the taking of the village of Vionville and the hamlet of Flavigny, which is given frequently as taken soon after Vionville. There seems little doubt, however, now, that Vionville was taken con-

siderably before the other, in spite of the reports to the contrary.

The above statements may have referred to some ground in front of the village of Vionville and the copse of Flavigny. The better opinion would seem to be that as late as one o'clock the latter was attacked *in vain*, and that it was not till after 3 P.M., when the 10th corps moved into line by Purieux and Mars-la-Tour, and was directed against the woods, and a division of the 8th corps coming up a little later along the margin of the wood south of Vionville, that Flavigny was taken; in fact, according to some accounts, this village fell some time later, and, according to the French account, was well held by them a great portion of the day. At the same time, the attack on Doncourt by Bruville was repulsed, and the Germans thrown back to the ground a little to the north of Mars-la-Tour.

I have said that the French were observing all the roads and ravines by which reinforcements might be sent, and occupying all advantageous ground as far as the more northern of the two roads to Verdun. Marshal Bazaine had immediately after the beginning of the fighting left his head-quarters for the battle-field, where he issued new orders to each corps as for a combat on a large scale.

The fighting between Buddenbrock's division and the advanced line of the French went on in the

meantime near Vionville and Flavigny, and several hours thus passed, during which either Bazaine had not yet completed his changes, or the French attack was delayed till later through ignorance of the weakness of their enemy.

To the south-east the battlefield presented a slightly different aspect. Here the division of the ~~5th~~ 3rd corps under General Von Stülpnagel advanced from the rear not earlier than eleven o'clock, having come from Gorze. They deployed in the open, where they were met by a terrible fire. Their advance, however, seemed irresistible; officers in front, men following blindly, till some companies at the entrance of a hollow road (*ravin*) were ordered to lie down, the projectiles passing over them. The ammunition of the French seemed inexhaustible, but not so with the Germans, who, when more troops arrived, had to retire to get more.

At last the stubborn Brandenburg regiment, which belonged to Stülpnagel's division, succeeded in pushing forward and reaching the position of the French in the wood, where they attacked them fiercely at the point of the bayonet, driving them out of their cover towards Rezonville, where their batteries were posted.

Stülpnagel now took possession of the wood, so that his left wing was not too far from the right of Buddenbrock; his batteries he also moved forward

still farther, and thus they held their positions till some batteries and cavalry of Rheinbaben arrived, then the Lehmann brigade, which was ordered immediately to support Buddenbrock.

It was indeed time; for this division had got into a critical position. It had had, on account of its losses, to close up more, so that the space between it and the division Stülpnagel had now become too wide. Some of the 6th division of cavalry (under the Duke of Mecklenburg) was ordered to advance through this gap, and to break the force of the enemy's attacks on the exposed ground. With great rapidity they dashed forward, but were met by a storm of infantry and artillery fire, which soon threw them into confusion, for they had ventured to attack unbroken regiments, and now gave way after great loss, and were charged in flank by French cuirassiers and dragoons, hitherto unseen.

This cavalry attack, although unsuccessful as a charge, was useful to some extent, for it afforded for a time relief to Buddenbrock's division and the brigade Lehmann, which had come to its assistance, as by the attack a portion of the enemy's force had been withdrawn from their front, and their regiments made another advance. Hardly had this begun, when General Bataille, commander of one of the generally *unfortunate* Frossard's divisions, was wounded, and compelled to give up his command.

The regiments of it now gave way, and caused part of another division to join in the retrograde movement.*

Bazaine observing this, now sent two regiments of cuirassiers and lancers to check the farther advance of the Prussian infantry. The lancers were repulsed, nor could the cuirassiers succeed in breaking through, although they attacked with great bravery, but they were driven back, pursued by German hussars of the 5th and 6th cavalry divisions, and it was this body of cavalry which enveloped and nearly took Bazaine and his staff (who had to draw their swords) prisoners.

The German regiments now again pressed onwards, the greater portion of them crossing the most southern road between Mars-la-Tour and Vionville. And now commenced a desperate struggle in some woods to the north of these. Things were in a critical state, for it was past two o'clock, and most of the regiments had been engaged for five hours in murderous fighting. Only two more regiments could be drawn from their position in the reserve to stem the constantly increasing number of the NOW attacking forces of the enemy. Denser and denser came the masses; more and more of his batteries got into position on the northern heights; the Prussians

* General von Alvensleben has since told me it was the Black Brunswicker Hussars, bearing the same device as our 17th Lancers.

could no longer advance without the danger of being surrounded or taken in flank, for just in this part of the battlefield the French outnumbered them as nearly three to one, and unless time for reinforcements could be gained, the 3d corps would evidently be swept away.

At this moment a large and compact force of German cavalry thunders forward at a terrific pace over the blood-stained ground. They almost seemed anxious to perish. Greater than ever before are the opposing French masses, and in their front, lines of skirmishers and several batteries. It seems that Alvensleben thoroughly and quickly understanding his position, saw that he must sacrifice some of the cavalry supporting the 3d corps, and so gave the command to beat back the enemy at any price—to attack the guns, create confusion, and thus gain time and save the infantry and batteries, who had been fighting all day till then,—in fact, "*to charge home.*" *

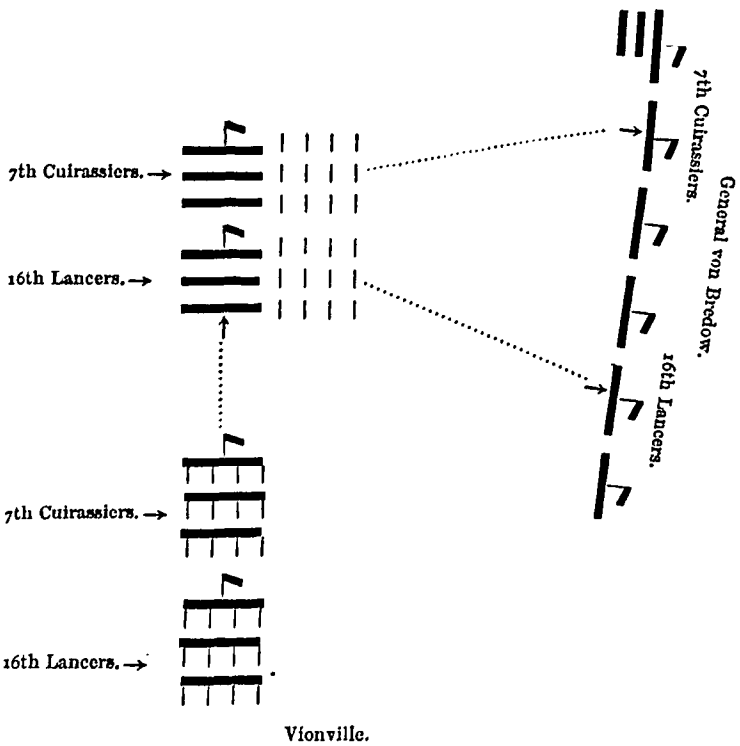
The cuirassiers of Magdebourg (Count Bismarck's) and the lancers of Altmarck, Nos. 7 and 16, of Bredow's brigade, belonging to the cavalry division of Rheinbaben, the 7th led by Von Schmetten, the 16th by Dollen, fly onward like clouds driven by the gale, through showers of projectiles, large and small. They penetrate through the enemy's two lines and right

* Count von Alvensleben has assured me that he ordered the charge for nothing but the moral effect it must cause, and to show the French that he was not giving way, but still capable of advance.

through his batteries, cutting down the gunners at their guns, several of which can only fire one round before the horsemen are upon them. But they are now met by French heavy cavalry, and, in their crippled state, taken in front and flank by Forton's division and chasseurs, sabre now crosses sabre, and but a small remnant succeed in getting back untouched.

The attack had caused an enormous sacrifice of life, but its object had been attained. The division Buddenbrock could not only retain its position, but it could in the confusion which this brilliant charge (the *Todtenritt*) created among the French troops, advance again with success, driving several of the French batteries backwards, capturing one gun, and allowing the Brandenburg regiment to get fresh ammunition.

But however brilliant this small success, it was of short duration; for it became very evident how great was the French numerical superiority: they could now draw upon each of their five corps, and march without hindrance from nearly all parts of the field as required. The Germans, on the other hand, did not receive considerable reinforcements until 4 P.M. At that time the main body of the 10th corps and all its batteries, which, after the most fatiguing march, required rest, was forced to take part in the battle; about the same time two regiments of dragoon-guards,



THE "TODTENRITT" OR DEATH-RIDE.—BATTLE OF VIONVILLE, 16th August, 2.30 P.M.

Six Squadrons = 900 *Men.*

Order:—Front eastward—Left-wheel, to make use of a depression in ground north of Vionville—Right-wheel by divisions—Take intervals while riding forward towards the edge of the heights to eastward—Form line to the front—*Forward!!*

Nos. 1 and 2, which had been attached to the above corps (under General Brandenburg, II.), and were marching on a road more to the south, arrived on the field, after a ride of ten English miles.

The support these afforded was great, but not sufficient for the hardly-pressed Germans. Two German corps were still opposed, with some cavalry, to nearly five French corps, and the speedy approach of reinforcements, which had been ordered to the front from the eastern bank of the Moselle, was (like the Prussians and Grouchy at Waterloo) most anxiously looked for.

About 4 P.M. Prince Frederick Charles arrived on the field from his head-quarters at Pont-à-Mousson. On receipt of the news of the fighting, he had taken horse at once and ridden a distance of fourteen English miles with his staff in an hour. His Royal Highness arrived at a moment when the issue of the battle looked most doubtful. The horse-artillery of Buddenbrock's division, still in rapid action near the southern road, had suffered terribly, and even with the total number of batteries of the 10th corps, which had now commenced to get into position, they were not a match for the vastly-increasing numbers posted along the opposite northern heights, and with Marshal Lebœuf assisting the movement against their left flank, he having changed front on the pivot of St. Marcel. Against two regiments of

the 10th corps, Nos. 16 and 57 of Wedel's brigade which had now advanced to the opposite side of Mars-la-Tour road against the heights occupied by the enemy, a terrible shell and chassepot fire was opened, the former setting fire to the village. These fresh regiments, however, advanced as coolly as if on parade over the rising ground, then down the hollow, and up the incline towards the heights; but large masses of infantry of the 4th French corps, which had hitherto stood under cover, took them suddenly in flank, and, after suffering great loss, they were obliged to retreat, the 16th losing, according to the French account, its colours, and being nearly destroyed by Cissey's division.* Thereupon the two regiments of dragoon-guards, Nos. 1 and 2, already mentioned, under Brigadier-General Brandenburg, II., dashed forward, first one and then the other, upon the pursuing French infantry. The impetuous squadrons, especially those of the first-named regiment, were received by heavy fire from musketry and mitrailleuses, but they notwithstanding broke through the French mass, throwing them into fearful disorder. The farther they advanced, however, the less were they able to make head against the increasing

* The French statement is incorrect. Many Prussian officers (among whom is Von Alvensleben himself) state that in the struggle for the 16th's colours the French carried off pieces of the flag, and the top of the staff was broken. The staff itself, with the glorious shreds, remained in possession of the Germans.

masses of the enemy, and were at last, after terrible losses, as we shall see hereafter, particularly to the 1st dragoon-guards, compelled to fall back. Just in the same position the division Stülpnagel found itself; heroically it had held its ground; all the impetuous attacks of the enemy on its front had been repulsed, yet there seemed little doubt that at last the French would become masters of the woods by very reason of their overwhelming numbers.

Taking a glance now from that critical state of affairs in this position of the battlefield to those troops which in the morning were still stationed east of the Moselle, we find that those nearest to the fighting were the regiments belonging to the division Barnekow of the 8th (Von Göben's) corps of the 1st (Steinmetz's) army. They arrived near the Moselle at noon, and had received orders to bivouac there during the night. About the same time the 14th regiment belonging to the 9th corps (General Mansfield's) arrived, and had also received orders to bivouac in the same locality.

The whole of the above division, as also the regiment No. 11, had made a most fatiguing march, and some rest was required. The thunder of the artillery, distinctly audible, coming from the battlefield, now changed their dispositions. One hour only of rest was granted them, after which they crossed and marched up to Gorze. It was past 4 P.M. when the

horse-artillery and leading squadrons reached the plateau to the north of that village, the infantry, after wonderful marching, arriving shortly afterwards, and a few hours later the regiments of the Grand-Duke's Hessian division, under the command of Prince Louis, which had for the moment been placed under the orders of General von Manstein, commanding the 9th corps, made their appearance. The sight that met the eyes of these troops as they arrived was terrible. As far as the eye scanned around, the ground was covered with killed and wounded. Out of the woods crawled others, endeavouring to get to the rear for aid, as it was not possible to carry so many wounded in the ambulances. Stülpnagel had been early informed of the approach of these troops, and, in compliance with his orders, the horse-artillery and squadrons advanced first, the fatigued infantry had to go slower. Owing to the dense copses and undergrowth, the mounted troops had most of them to march along the roads. It was nearly 5 P.M. when the first, and 6 P.M. when the last battalion of Barnekow gained the farther edge of the wood, and came in sight of the enemy, Part of the division seems to have advanced with other troops towards Vionville, as I have already stated; the others moved in the direction of Rezonville—a deadly advance! These found it most difficult to debouch from the border of the wood, after having come up, not by the usual route, but by almost im-

practicable paths from the Moselle, enabling the Germans opportunely to again attack.

To the south-east of Rezonville the ground was covered with infantry and batteries of the Imperial Guard; between it and Gravelotte a deep hollow exists, in which could be distinctly seen the glittering arms of the advanced-guard of the French reserve. The woods and open fields in front of them were, without any interruption, exposed to a fire of shell and shrapnel, but the German regiments, in spite of this, pressed onward. In front came No. 72, the Rhenish regiment, then No. 40, the Hohenzollern, and in rear again No. 11, the Silesian regiment, whose fearful losses I shall have to record later on.

The ground here is undulating, and some half-companies in skirmishing order were first thrown out. The men crept across the first and second hollow, so as to get within good musket-range; they then lay down, their heads and arms alone visible, the officers kneeling by their side. The advanced troops of the enemy now rushed forward out of the hollows. Some half-companies were nearly entirely, some partially destroyed, and replaced by other half-companies; the growing darkness alone lessened the slaughter.

Very little ground had been gained in this part of the field, for the enemy held his own both on the heights and in the hollow. But the heroic bravery of

these three regiments had nevertheless a great bearing on the result of the battle, and the graves all down each side of the road between the woods show how fearful was the struggle. The left wing of the enemy had now been seriously engaged, and it had been impossible for him to throw any more of his reserves on the division Stülpnagel, the attacks upon which ceased. Simultaneously with this fearful struggle for a few feet of ground, another most brilliant, but at the same time indecisive encounter, of cavalry took place on the opposite side of the battlefield. The Germans say the occasion for it was the same as for the previous (third charge), advance of overwhelming masses of the enemy. The French say it was an attempt of the Germans to turn their right by cavalry, and that it was met by their 2d and 7th hussars and 2d and 11th dragoons. The Germans belonged to the division Rheinbaben, the French to the division under Le Grand, attached to the 4th, De l'Admirault's corps. It was, as stated, quite indecisive, General Le Grand being killed, and General Montaigu severely wounded on the French side, and the force brought out of action by General Gondrecourt.

Evidence seems to point to the attempt being made by the French; for, weak as the Germans were, it is unlikely that such experienced generals as Alvensleben and Rheinbaben would forget the warning of the great Napoleon, "that in endeavouring to

turn the enemy's flank, you necessarily expose your own; and, if weak, is a most dangerous experiment; and not worth the risk." One could see distinctly the masses of French horsemen coming from the west of Mars-la-Tour, and endeavouring to pierce the German flank and attack his batteries, which had been in action the entire day.

> "Then rushed the steeds, to battle driven;
> Then shook the hills, with thunder riven;
> And, volleying like the bolts of heaven,
> Far flashed the red artillery."
>
> —CAMPBELL.

The collision took place just near the above village. A hand-to-hand combat ensued in a wide semicircle, which extended to the neighbouring villages, the wounded and unhorsed joining also in the furious *mêlée* on both sides during what seemed nearly the end. After half-an-hour the struggle ceased, and the ground was strewed with dead men and horses. The French heroes vanished again, with about the loss of one-third of their number *hors-de-combat*, including two generals; the German heroes halted by the side of their comrades of the artillery and infantry, whom they had saved.

After this fourth encounter of cavalry the attacks of the French in this region of the battlefield lost their force. One made considerably later by the French infantry was easily repulsed, and the great

cannonade opened still later seems to have had for its object rather to cover their retreat than to prepare for a new attack. In other parts of the battlefield the fighting continued till after dark, and at the south-eastern extremity till later on in the night. There on both sides more reinforcements made their appearance: on the German side, three regiments of the Grand-Ducal Hessian division; on the French, more regiments of the Guard. When the Hessians arrived near the woods to the north-east of Gorze after 8 P.M., the French opened upon them unexpectedly from a distance of little over one hundred paces. The troops most to the front flung themselves forward with wild hurrahs, and the fighting was carried on without any defined or regular plan on account of the darkness and the woods. Sometimes the French, at others the Hessians, had to fall back; at last large detachments of the latter arrived, and drove the French back at the point of the bayonet, but only for a little distance.

At this hour the French had kept the boundary-line, or nearly so, of their previous position, when General von Manstein, commander of the 9th German corps, ordered the troops, at nearly 10 P.M., to discontinue the fighting.

A little later on the outposts of the two armies might be seen still standing opposite each other at a short distance, and patrols from both sides now and

then encountered each other. When the morning began to dawn, about 4 A.M., the French alarmed their camps, and from the tall trees near, one could observe their retirement in the direction of Metz.

A fearful battle had come to an end. Everywhere lay heaps of dead and wounded, for this day had demanded as great, perhaps greater, sacrifices than most battles of modern times. Even if we add to the forces on the German side the reinforcements which arrived in the afternoon, the enemy's troops amounted still to nearly double.

When all the reports of the commanders of German corps had been collected, it was found that 17,000 men were killed and wounded, among whom were 700 officers (or one officer in $23\frac{1}{2}$ men).

The loss of the French averaged less, because of the greater number of troops engaged. Their reports, however, give their loss at 16,954, so that their being in such good positions, besides fighting with more men, explains the above.

The trophies taken were very few. The advantage seemed evidently on the side of the Germans, and the battle covered with eternal glory Von Alvensleben, II., and the 3d corps, which left one-third of its strength on this fiercely-fought field.

CHAPTER V.

Positions on each side—Remarks on the battle—Explanation of the various cavalry attacks—Translation of poem, "The Trumpet of Mars-la-Tour."

AT the end of the day the French occupied the line of Gravelotte, Rezonville, St. Marcel, and Bruville. Opposite to them stood the Germans, occupying the woods of Les Ognons, Flavigny, Vionville, the woods north of this, Mars-la-Tour, and the ground a little to the north of that village.

The entire French army was present, but of the Germans, equivalent to three corps, the 3d, 10th, and divisions of the 8th and 9th, the cavalry, and some detachments. It would hardly seem correct to say, as some English writers do, "that as darkness came on the heads of the 8th and 9th corps began to appear," considering that parts of these two got to the borders of the woods near Vionville by about 4.30 P.M., although unable at first to debouch. They, however, favoured the last and successful attack on the village of Flavigny and the ground above. It puts one in mind of the numerous accounts of

Waterloo (Hamley's and Chesney's "*bien entendu*" excepted), in which we are told that the Prussians arrived when the battle was all but over, in place of allowing that Von Bülow came seriously into action by about 4.30 P.M. with 20,000 men and 14 guns, and commenced enveloping the French right flank, and which the German despatches show us led to the taking of the cemetery at Planchenoit by Colonel Hiller's brigade at five o'clock, drawing away a second strong reinforcement from the flower of Napoleon's force, in fact, twelve out of twenty-four battalions of the Imperial Guard, all Lobau's corps, and several other regiments, as more Prussians arrived; and this at the very moment when they were all required for the assault of the Allied position in front, in place of having to continue the desperate struggle at Planchenoit, where the Prussians lost 6320 men in four hours, as many as did the English, independently of allies, all day.

The reader will pardon this digression. We now return to the battlefield. Part of the Germans established their bivouac at Gorze, the 7th and half the 8th remained at Ars, their advanced posts in the Bois-de-Vaux and des Ognons. The head-quarters of the King of Prussia were at Pont-à-Mousson. Some time after nine o'clock the French army received the order to encamp on their positions. The Marshal commanding returned to Gravelotte, and took up his

quarters in the house the Emperor had slept in previously. Towards one o'clock instructions were issued by General Jarris, Bazaine's chief of the staff, to the commanders of the different corps-d'armée as follows:—"The great consumption of munitions of war for artillery and infantry during this day, and the failure of supplies of food required for several more, prevents us continuing the march which we had traced out; we therefore return to the plateau of Plappeville." Then followed the detail, and the order ended by stating that the movement would commence at four in the morning, and would be covered by the division Metman.

Turning now to the reports of the German losses, we find the following:—Of the 52d regiment, belonging to the division Stülpnagel, all the staff-officers, ten captains, and five subalterns were killed or wounded; the 1st battalion numbered only 280 men on the following morning, or one-third of its strength, and was brought out of action by a lieutenant. The fusiliers of No. 24 infantry, belonging to Buddenbrock's division, were nearly annihilated; all their officers were dead or wounded, and they were brought out of action by the sergeant-major. In the regiment No. 11, belonging to the advanced guard of the 9th corps, and which was only engaged from 5 P.M., of 60 officers, 44 were killed or wounded, and 1000 out of 3000 men (this shows how the officers led);

its No. 4 company, numbering on the morning of the 16th 250 men, was reduced by the morning of the 17th to only 87. Marshal Bazaine says that No. 16 regiment of Wedel's brigade was nearly destroyed, and this is proved by their tombs round Mars-la-Tour and Vionville; he says it lost its colours, and that out of 3000 men only 160 remained on the following morning. When the assembly sounded in the 1st dragoon-guards, it was found that no less than 13 officers out of 19 had fallen. The youngest captain, the Prince of Hohenzollern, was now its senior officer, and had brought the regiment out of action. When the commander of No. 7 (Count Bismarck's), Magdeburg cuirassiers, after their brilliant charge ("*Todtenritt*") sounded the assembly, only equivalent to three troops could answer the roll-call, and some of these wounded. Of German generals, one, Von Döring, commander of the 9th infantry brigade, was killed on the spot, and three others more or less severely wounded, viz., Wedel, commander of the 38th infantry brigade, who had two horses shot under him, and was missed and reported dead; Von Rauch, commander of the 15th brigade; and Von Diepenbruck-Grüter, commander of the 14th cavalry brigade. This latter died shortly after of his wounds at Pont-à-Mousson.

It has been seen how the 3d corps covered itself with glory; and the names of many officers must be

added to that of Alvensleben, such as Buddenbrock, Stülpnagel, Rheinbaben, Schmitten, Dollen, and the Scottish officer Lieutenant Campbell (now Baron Campbell), who puts one in mind again of Sergeant Ewart of the Scots Greys at Waterloo. Nor ought one to forget how the old name of Brandenburg shone forth in this most desperate fight; how the regiment bearing this name fought at the point of the bayonet till the "*Todtenritt*" enabled it to get more ammunition; how General Brandenburg, II., at the head of the 1st and 2d dragoon-guards, threw himself on the enemy, and saved his infantry and artillery comrades with such terrible loss.

The memorial chapel and its tombs of the French at Mars-la-Tour also testify to the heroic conduct of French officers and men. The details of their killed and wounded not having been made up with the same exactitude, are given here as 16,900.

Telegram of the King to the Queen.

"PONT-À-MOUSSON, *August* 17, 7.10 P.M.

"Lieutenant-General Von Alvensleben moved forward on 16th inst. to the west of Metz on the line of retreat of enemy towards Verdun. Bloody battle against the corps Decaen, L'Admirault, Froissart, Canrobert, and the Garde Imperiale. He was supported successively by No. 10 army corps and parts of 8th and 9th corps under Friedrich Karl.

Enemy, in spite of important advantages, was thrown back after more than twelve hours incessant fighting. Our side, Döring and Wedel fallen; Rauch and Grüter wounded.

"Saluted troops to-day on field of victory. Battle took place at Mars-la-Tour. Cavalry took two eagles and seven guns. WILHELM."

It will be seen that Von Wedel was reported dead and Grüter wounded, which turned out to be the reverse.

The above telegram disposes of the question of part of the 8th and 9th corps taking great part in the fighting.

In the several accounts of this great battle there appears to have been some confusion in the different statements describing the cavalry charges, the first and second of these being sometimes put down as one and the same, and the third has been made the second. The following explanation may suffice.

There were during the day four different occasions, now become rare, for using cavalry successfully, or partly so, in large masses.

(1.) First attack, at about 12 noon, in the gap formed between the divisions Buddenbrock and Stülpnagel, viz., the 6th division of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, to rescue the former division from its peril.

Result.—Thrown back in confusion, but some time gained, and relief afforded.

(2.) The "*Todtenritt*" of No. 7 cuirassiers and 16th lancers (Bredow's brigade of Rheinbaben's 5th divsion), composed of six squadrons, at about 2.30 P.M.

Result.—Partly successful, although at a fearful sacrifice of life. Time for reinforcements gained, and a re-supply of ammunition to Brandenburg corps.

(3.) Desperate charge of 1st and 2d dragoon-guards, 3d brigade of Goltz's division under General Brandenburg, II., to save the artillery and the infantry regiments, Nos. 16 and 57 of Wedel's brigade, which had advanced beyond the Mars-la-Tour road at about 4.30 P.M.

Result.—Enemy thrown into confusion, but one of Wedel's regiments, No. 16, nearly destroyed (and stated to have lost their colours in Bazaine's despatch). No. 57 and the artillery were partly rescued, but with immense loss to the dragoons of Brandenbourg, II.

(4.) Great cavalry action, mass against mass, as darkness was falling, between the French cavalry of L'Admirault's corps and German cavalry of Rheinbaben's division.

Result.—Quite indecisive; two of the French generals out of the three fell.

It has been frequently said that Bazaine and all his staff were enveloped in a German cavalry

charge about half-past two, which would be the "*Todtenritt.*" This, however, is incorrect, as he himself says "that having ordered between twelve and one o'clock, when General Bataille fell, the cuirassiers of the Guard and 3d lancers to charge the Prussian infantry, these regiments were arrested by the enemy's squares, and were thrown back, pursued by No. 17 the Brunswick Hussars and 11th of Redern's brigade, 5th division, as far as a battery where he was, and he was obliged (separated from all his staff) to draw his sword and fight his way through like his officers."

Before the introduction of arms of precision, one finds cavalry attacks successful even against guns in position and infantry not previously shaken by fighting or fire, as on the 11th September 1793, when four regiments of cavalry attacked at Aveone-le-Sec a corps of 8000 French infantry and artillery in two squares, the French being overthrown, and 2000 of them being taken prisoners, with five stand of colours; again at Villars-en-Couche, 1793, and others.

We have seen that the bold attack of the 3d corps had effectually stopped the French retreat, for Bazaine could no longer securely do so by either of the two southern roads, one being entirely closed, and the other so contiguous to the enemy that a flank march was rendered nearly impossible. Military men consider that there were grave reasons against

the third and more northern route, for it is hilly, and a detour of thirteen miles necessary, and he would probably be forced into another battle before reaching Verdun; for if the Germans rested on the 17th, they could certainly come up with him on the 18th, and get to Verdun on that day or the 19th. Some Prussian writers suggest that he might have taken the most northern route, that of Metz, Longuyon, and Sedan, perpendicular to the rear of his position, and where the Orne valley would allow of his sustaining an engagement with his rear-guard: this consideration is for readers. Major Pratt and other writers agree that the new system of tactics for the chassepot and mitrailleuse was the probable cause of Bazaine's determination to accept another battle in a strong position after the 16th; and which seems correct.

The French, however, differ from these opinions, and say that it was not so. In judging of the above state of things, it is clear that Bazaine, without a victory, could not effect a junction with any other French army; and as Mars-la-Tour had not been decisive, each prepared for a further struggle. He had said in his report to the Emperor, "I have discontinued my intended movement for a few hours;" but he left out the statement when he would be able to continue his march, and also that he lost his supplies at the village of Gravelotte. Besides the trophies taken by the Germans of two eagles and seven guns,

350 officers and 2000 men were made prisoners. He mentions in his despatch, as will be hereafter seen, that the 93d retook its eagle, and that the 16th German regiment lost its colours. There is no mention by the Germans whether the eagle was retaken by the French. Bazaine's reason for retiring on account of lack of ammunition has been considered a serious reflection on the French administration.

The following account of the "*Todtenritt*," or death-ride, has been given by the Count von Schmitten, who says, "Every one of the gunners of the first battery on which the troopers fell were cut down or pierced" (Count von Schmitten himself striking down the captain). "In approaching the second battery my helmet was pierced by two bullets, and my orderly officer thrown from his horse wounded in two places. Lieutenant Campbell, the Scottish officer (now Baron Campbell), when the French cuirassiers fell upon ours, seized the eagle of the regiment with his left hand, which was at once shattered by a bullet, and he was surrounded by the French horsemen, but some of our own cuirassiers cut their way desperately towards him and saved him."

"Never," he says, "shall I forget the moment that I gave the order to the first trumpeter I met to sound the assembly! The trumpet had been shattered by a shot, and produced a sound which pierced us to the quick."

The following verses are intended to be as good a translation as the writer can make of the now-famous German poem of Ferdinand Freiligrath, entitled "The Trumpet of Gravelotte," which would seem to be a mistake, as there was no episode of the kind there, but at Mars-la-Tour. It brings us back to our own glorious Balaclava of 1854,* and is considered a masterpiece of German poetry.

THE TRUMPET OF MARS-LA-TOUR.

(*August* 16, 1870.)

1.

They have vomited fire and death,
But stayed not our headlong course;
For their regiments of foot and batteries strong
We have ridden them down with our horse.

2.

With brandishing sabres and slackened rein,
And lances "*en couche*" with their pennons,
Thus have we charged o'er and galloped them down,
Magdeburghers and Lancers of Altmarck.

3.

'Twas a bloody ride truly, that great "*Todtenritt*,"
As they fell 'neath our sabres and lances;
Of two regiments† that rode on this great day and fought,
Each second brave comrade hath perished.

4.

Pierced through their breasts, their foreheads clove through,
There they lay dead and cold on the turf,
In the vigour of youth and of manhood cut off,—
Ho! trumpeter! sound the assembly!

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* General von Alvensleben made this same remark to me.

† The poem says two regiments (*by license*), but there were in reality only six squadrons, three of each regiment (Bredow's brigade, 5th division).

5.

Then he grasps his trumpet and tries to sound,
But from it, whose shrill cry of wrath
Has sounded the *Forwards! "für Tod oder Ruhm,"*
The voice of this trumpet is failing.

6.

But a muffled groan, not the shrill cry of wrath,
Comes from out its metallic wide mouth;
A bullet has shattered its long brazen neck,
And now, wounded, 'tis mourning the fallen.

7.

For the brave, for the faithful, for the *Watch on the Rhine,*
For our brothers who have fallen this day;
Yes! for all its voice pierces us now to the quick
With its sad inarticulate sounds.

8.

Now comes the night-march, and we ride along,
As the watch-fires around us are burning;
The horses are neighing, and the rain pours down,
And we mourn o'er the dead and the dying.

H. B. F.

Death or Glory! the motto of No. 17 Black Brunswicker Hussars, and of our 17th, Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers.

NOTE.—In the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava in 1854, our 11*th Hussars* and 17th Lancers rode, the latter bearing the device "*Death or Glory*" and cross-bones (borrowed from No. 17 Black Brunswicker Prussian Hussars); and strange to say, at nearly the same hour on the 16th August 1870 (that is, sixteen years later), the Brunswick Hussars, with the same motto, "*Tod oder Ruhm,*" rode, accompanied by the 11*th Prussian Hussars*, both of Redern's brigade (5th Rheinbaben's division), attacked and nearly captured Marshal Bazaine himself and all his staff.

CHAPTER VI.

Bazaine's despatch and remarks thereon—Résumé of battle events—Comments of various writers, and replies.

"AFTER the brilliant battle of Borny, the troops who took part in it received their orders to continue the march on the morning of the 15th, and which had been already indicated to them,* the 2d and 6th corps-d'armée following the southern route by Rezonville, Mars-la-Tour, Manheulles, the 3d and 4th by the more northern route by Conflans and Etain, the Guard, the general reserve, and the parks marching in rear of No. 6 corps. The first column was covered by the cavalry of reserve of Forton, the second by the division of chasseurs d'Afrique of Barrail. The points to be occupied on the 15th were—Vionville by the 2d corps, Rezonville by the 6th, Doncourt les Conflans by the 4th, St. Marcel and Verneville by the 3d, the Imperial Guard in rear at Gravelotte, the division Forton at Trouville, with orders to scout well along the road to St. Mihiel, the

* But without sufficient detail, for which Bazaine was responsible.

division of General Barrail at Jarny (along the northern of the two roads). The delays caused by the blocking of convoys, and those resulting from the participation of the 3d and 4th corps in the combat at Borny, did not permit these two corps to commence early enough their movements, nor to carry them out in the limited time accorded to them. The 3d corps, which should have been in rear of the 4th, had got ahead, and only had three of its divisions on the plateau of Gravelotte by 10 P.M. With regard to the 4th corps, it could only commence its movement early on the 16th.

"The left column, composed of 2d, 6th, and Guard, had pretty well got into positions on the 15th, but I was obliged to order it to maintain these on the 16th till midday, so that the 4th corps should take its place on the ridge; the news I had received of a strong concentration of the enemy to the south, and on my left, and prudence, dictating that the two columns of retreat should act so as to support each other on whichever side the enemy might present himself.

"On the 16th August, in the morning, the 2d corps was in front of Rezonville, to the left of the direct and most southern road to Verdun; the 6th on higher ground to the right of this route; the 3d, with three divisions, had its cavalry between Verneville and St. Marcel. The division Metman was '*en*

marche' to join the 4th, which was proceeding to Doncourt; the Guard was at Gravelotte.

"Such was the position when, shortly after 9 A.M., the advanced guard of Forton's cavalry signalled the approach of the enemy (they allow themselves that they were surprised by shell). Three batteries of horse-artillery, coming in sight from near Trouville, shelled them violently, obliging them to retire in all haste in rear of the camp of the two corps-d'armée, a little distance from Rezonville.

"On hearing the guns, General Frossard at once occupied his positions above Flavigny, with one brigade (Lapassez) facing the left rear, to watch the great woods of St. Arnauld and Ognons, and to cover the head of the ravine leading to Gorze. Marshal Canrobert also took up his positions, and deployed his corps in front of Rezonville, between the route to Verdun and the village of St. Marcel. The appearance of some of the enemy's cavalry and cannonade against the division Forton was only the prelude to a general action which was coming on. Two attacks could now be made out as about to occur: one coming from the woods of Vionville and St. Arnauld on the left, the other more on our front by Mars-la-Tour and Vionville. When I heard of the fighting, I left Gravelotte with my staff, giving orders to the Guard to hold itself in reserve on the right and left of the route, and warning

Marshal Lebœuf that he must pivot on his left to support No. 6 corps and take the enemy in flank. I counted also on General L'Admirault marching to sustain the turning movement of the 3d corps, beyond which he ought to come into position, when he heard the guns.

"On arriving, I found the 2d corps heavily engaged along its entire front and under a tremendous artillery fire. Keeping his positions a little in rear of the crests, Marshal Canrobert, on his part, had arrested the offensive movement of the enemy, who was only keeping up an artillery fire against him. It was evident the enemy was going to make a great effort on our left from the woods which sheltered his men, and to cut us off from any line of retreat on Metz. Although I saw the meaning of this attack, I was anxious that our right should be solidly supported. Before the coming into line of the troops of Marshal Lebœuf, I ordered the Forton division of cavalry to go and take position in rear of the 6th corps (Canrobert), on the ancient Roman road which runs from Gravelotte to Doncourt, having at his back the woods of Villars-au-Bois, and with orders to charge the enemy at any opportune moment.

"Having made these first dispositions, I called forward the batteries of twelve-pounders of the general reserve to reply to the enemy's, which were very

trying to the 2d corps. It was now between twelve and one o'clock. General Bataille was wounded, and his division got into confusion, and caused this also in the division Vergé. I therefore ordered the 3d lancers and the cuirassiers of the Guard to charge the Prussian infantry. The former were repulsed, and the cuirassiers forming in three lines as if they had been at the manœuvres, threw themselves with heroic bravery on the enemy's squares, which they could not break. Some squadrons of Prussian hussars (Brunswickers) now pursued them on their retreat, advancing as far as some of the batteries, near one of which I found myself. I got separated from my staff, and was obliged to draw my sword, as also all of them, and to fight hand to hand not far from my officers.

"The temporary hesitation produced among the Prussians enabled me to get up the division Picard, grenadiers of the Guard, with General Bourbaki, relieving Bataille's and Vergé's divisions, on each side of Rezonville, while a division of No. 6 corps came up to the supports on the ridge of the ravine of Vionville. The voltigeurs of Deligny's division faced the Bois-des-Ognons, which was occupied by a battalion of chasseurs, and to observe the approaches by which the Prussians might get their foot on the plateau of Gravelotte.

"At the same moment that the enemy made his

attack on Rezonville, he endeavoured to turn our right by a great attack of his cavalry" (*Todtenritt*). "Three of his regiments,* the cuirassiers of the King and two regiments of lancers, charged, through the right of the 6th corps, our batteries, and even passed the crest that we occupied, and tried to take our infantry in reverse. The division Forton, the presence of whom he had not the slightest suspicion of, took them in flank and rear, and this mass of cavalry was completely broken down under the sabres of our dragoons and cuirassiers. Our right was now quite disengaged, and the fire of Marshal Lebœuf commenced to be felt. It was now past two o'clock, and the enemy was thrown back everywhere on our right; in the centre the grenadiers of the Guard had stopped the attack, and on the left he had not taken the initiative that I had been expecting, but which he was still intending.

"The fire of his guns had nearly ceased, and he was evidently making preparations for a new effort. Completely reassured as to my right by the entry into line of the first troops of my 3d corps, I ordered Marshal Lebœuf to maintain firmly his position with the brigade Neyral, to unite with the 6th corps by means of the division Aymard, and to direct the division Montaudon on Gravelotte, which I destined

* There were only six squadrons in all, three of No. 7, and three of No. 16, of Bredow's brigade.

to occupy stronger, and the points of debouch from Ars-sur-Moselle. I brought up also to the same point the division of the 2d corps, which had been re-formed, and I placed batteries of twelve-pounders as also mitrailleuses at the opening of the ravine to destroy the enemy's masses if he attempted to come out. I knew that his reinforcements had passed Ars, and Noveaut, and I preoccupied myself above all with the attack which might be made on our left flank. My line of battle, which at the commencement of the action was nearly parallel to the line of the ravine of Rezonville, had taken now, shortly after 3 P.M., a direction nearly perpendicular to the woods of Les Ognons and stretching towards Mars-la-Tour, to the north of which was L'Admirault's 4th corps. In fact, at this moment the 4th corps was fast coming into line. The division Grenier, led by General L'Admirault in person, had pursued the enemy in his front, had thrown him back from St. Marcel, Bruville, and on to Mars-la-Tour, and prepared itself for the attack on Tronville. The division Cissy supported the movement, and on the right marched the divisions Legrand and Cherambault, the 2d chasseurs d'Afrique, and the brigade of the Guard, composed of lancers and dragoons, who had come up in support on hearing the fighting after having escorted the Emperor to Etain. General L'Admirault recognised that Tronville was too strongly

occupied to be taken with two divisions, and he contented himself in occupying temporarily the enemy, and in establishing himself on the ground he had gained.

"The enemy's artillery fire, which had for some time ceased, recommenced stronger than ever towards 3 P.M., to cover a new attack that the Prussians were going to attempt. After two hours of this, their attacking column showed itself in dense masses, and a charge of cuirassiers was attempted by them (1st and 2d dragoon-guards) on the division of Lafont de Villiers to pierce our centre. The 93d lost its eagle and one gun, but the Prussian cuirassiers found near them the division Valabrègue of the 2d corps, which had established itself on the crest above Rezonville. They were brought forward vigorously, and the eagle and gun retaken.

"I then stopped the movement of the division Montaudon on Gravelotte, and called it back to the 3d corps, to prepare for any eventuality on this side. The division of cavalry Forton, that I had also ordered to retire, retook its position close to the wood of Villars-au-Bois. General de Ligny rejoined with the four battalions of voltigeurs, which remained with them, and his 2d brigade, which had been supporting and relieving a part of the grenadiers on the crest of the ravine of Rezonville. At the same time General Bourbaki, bringing up all his guns, estab-

lished a great battery of fifty-four pieces, which thundered on the masses of the enemy, and disorganised him, while the fire of our infantry drove him back. On our left the enemy vainly endeavoured to debouch from the woods, which he found strongly guarded; he then tried to advance by the ravine which separates the Bois-de-St.-Avold from the Bois-des-Ognons, but our mitrailleuses stopped his attempts (although there is a regular road), and made him submit to enormous losses.

"About dark he attempted with a great mass of cavalry to turn our right flank (4th corps), but General De l'Admirault's cavalry under Le Grand, which he had ready to hand, charged him, and after successive attempts, where both sides fought with great bravery, the enemy retreated.

"General Cissy's division covered our rallying, and by his efforts put the left wing of the Prussians definitively in retreat.

"The enemy, beaten, retreated on all points, leaving us masters of the battlefield. When a last attempt was made by him, as the night closed, at Rezonville, where I happened to be at the moment, I called in haste the Zouaves, whom I placed in a position perpendicular to the route, and, aided by General Bourbaki, who reassembled the troops whom he had at hand, I repulsed this last attack, after which the fire ceased completely.

"It was then past 8 P.M.* Our troops had been fighting ten hours under a terrible artillery fire, and remained mistresses of the field of battle, where they stopped in part till midnight without any interference with them. I gave them orders to retire to the positions around Gravelotte in order to reprovision in food and war material.

"Head-quarters, Ban-St.-Martin, 22d August 1870

"The Marshal Commanding-in-Chief
the Army of the Rhine.

"BAZAINE."

The translation of Bazaine's despatch is given *in extenso* and literally. It is such a very strange compilation that it would hardly do to leave it out. When the positions at the early part of the battle were previously given by all French writers, and by Bazaine himself, it is difficult to understand how the Germans, as he says, had been beaten back, as on the most southern road through Rezonville, Mars-la-Tour, previously in their hands, had been taken, and their line of retreat to Verdun by it cut off.

The above paragraph in the despatch, viz., "That the beaten enemy retired from all points, leaving the French *masters* of the field of battle;" then, "That they again once more attacked at Rezonville;" and, finally, "That at this time the French remained *mistresses* of the field of battle," although General von

* Hessians only stopped firing at 10 P.M.

Manstein was actually fighting till 9.30 P.M. with some of the Hessians, would seem (if believed) to make out, by Bazaine's despatch, that he was doubly victor, and only two or three hours before he retreated with his whole army, five corps-d'armée against three German, his convoy being attacked and his wounded deserted; and that the above despatch must have been penned for the satisfaction of his master, the Emperor Napoleon, and in the hope that he would be able soon to repair the defeat, which would not read like one after a victory at Gravelotte on the morrow or the day after.

RÉSUMÉ.

What one has to remark particularly, in the foregoing pages, is—

(1.) The Scharnhorst administration of German armies by Count von Roon as compared with the wretched French, for which Lebœuf is much blamed.

(2.) The splendid way in which scouting was performed in the German, and the negligent way in the French army.

(3.) The explanation of their intentions by the German commanders to their subordinate generals, as compared with the custom followed by the French.

(4.) The responsibility taken by the German, compared with French generals, like before Waterloo, when Grouchy would not take the responsibility "de

marcher sur le canon de l'Empereur;" but Gneisenau took upon himself that of the retreat on Wavre in place of onwards, where Napoleon sent his force in pursuit after Ligny.

This battle of 16th August seems divisible into six periods.

First period.—Attack of German horse-artillery and cavalry; retreat of French cavalry in confusion; attack of Buddenbrock's, then of Stülpnagel's divisions, and desperate holding of the ground from near Rezonville to Mars-la-Tour till the arrival of a few reinforcements at about twelve o'clock, and charge of some of 6th Cavalry division. Capture of Vionville.

Second period.—Continued desperate fighting; the Brandenburg and other corps running short of ammunition; the death-ride of Bredow's brigade of Rheinbaben's 5th division at about 2.30 P.M., for gaining time and to produce moral effect; failure of attack on village of Flavigny, but capture of Mars-la-Tour and cutting off the road to Verdun; arrival of the 10th corps in force between 3 and 4 P.M.

Third period.—Arrival of more cavalry reinforcements, 1st and 2d dragoon-guards attached to the 10th corps, and more and more reinforcements on the French side; arrival of Prince Frederick Charles from his head-quarters; advance of Wedel's brigade of 10th corps across the Mars-la-Tour road towards the heights; the above village set on fire by the

French shells; perilous position of Wedel's brigade, and its rescue partially by the splendid charge of the 1st and 2d dragoon-guards under Brandenburg II. about 4 P.M.; desperate position, also, of Stülpnagel on the right, up to about 4 or 4.30 P.M.

Fourth period.—Arrival of portions of the 8th and 9th corps, Barnekow's division, and that of Prince Louis of Hesse, and a regiment, the 11th, belonging to General Wrangel's division, these having mounted the steep paths through the woods and by Gorze; attack and capture of the farm of Flavigny by the Germans, and some time later the ground above.

Fifth period.—Advance of the German reinforcements of Barnekow, Nos. 72, 40, and 11, against the French Guard, and relief to the hard-pressed division Stülpnagel, as the French left was now heavily engaged; great cavalry encounter on the opposite side of the field, near Mars-la-Tour, between cavalry of Rheinbaben's division and that of L'Admirault's corps, with indecisive results; darkness beginning to fall.

Sixth and closing period.—The fighting failing in force westward. To the south-east, where reinforcements arriving to the Germans, the fighting continues, on no definite plan, between the Hessian regiments and the Imperial Guard, the latter losing a little ground at last, and being driven back with the bayonet. At between 9 and 10 P.M. General von

Manstein orders the fighting to cease. Withdrawal of the French at about 4 A.M. towards Metz, thus giving up the line that they occupied at the close of the fighting.

COMMENTS.

Opinions expressed by Different Writers.	*Evidence against these "per contra."*
That Alvensleben was not right in attacking, if the French were not retiring northwards.	Their retiring westward was reported, and the southern road had to be cut; besides which, it was not known whether it was a rear-guard, and pressing demands were sent to the 10th corps and Red Prince at once.
German movements were made as if the retreating was by the more northern road.	See the Red Prince's marching orders on the night of the 15th to the 10th corps for the march on St. Hilaire.
It has been said, had not Bazaine been attacked, he would have done so himself in force.	He did not know the weakness of the Germans, and much delay occurred in his changing the positions, and from the confusion existing since the 14th.
There seemed a tendency of Bazaine not to quit the vicinity of Metz.	This appears in a great measure to have been the case, and he showed it when his left was attacked. Some writers consider, as he lacked everything, he did right.
Bazaine is said to have taken over the command only thirty-six hours before the 16th August.	He took over the command on the 12th August, or four days previously.

The 10th corps was directed on Etain in lieu of the battle-field.

The objective was clearly explained in the Prince's order to the 10th corps on the night of the 15th August, viz., to intercept Bazaine near Verdun.

Bazaine showed great immobility on account of the new French tactics in defensive positions.

This seems to have been generally allowed as the cause.

That Bazaine made no offensive movements on the 16th, as is said by some writers.

This seems quite incorrect, as by the account of both sides he did so, particularly with his 3d and 4th Army Corps, and the 3d German corps was nearly swept away. *Vide* Bazaine's movement that he ordered when he told Lebœuf to pivot on St. Marcel, and L'Admirault to join in the movement.

The above is for the reader's consideration.

DISPOSITIONS OF 17TH,

AND

EVENTS PRIOR TO,

AND

BATTLE OF GRAVELOTTE

OR

ST. PRIVAT LA MONTAGNE,

AUGUST 18, 1870.

CHAPTER VII.

Events of 17th August—Burning of French convoy and desertion of wounded—The dispositions of French and Germans for new battle—King's council of war—Topography of French position—Plan of German attack—Field-telegraph orders before the battle—Deficient reckoning of Bazaine.

Events of 17th August.

It has been said that the French commenced retiring at about 4 A.M. on the above day. It really commenced at 3 A.M., when they marched off to the positions assigned to them, while the Prussians at this hour pushed forward a strong and bold reconnaissance around Gravelotte. By the ravine and deep roads the vehicles and waggons of the French, loaded with provisions of all kinds, got blocked and in confusion along the route reserved for the troops, and the division Metman, charged with covering the retreat, could not defend this convoy against the attack of the Germans. It would have been, however, inexcusable to leave the enemy such great resources, collected with so much trouble; so it was therefore decided to burn

all that could not be saved. An immense bonfire was lighted in the deep ravine to the east of Gravelotte (which was to be on the morrow the scene of the bloodiest fighting perhaps during the war), and they cast pell-mell into it everything belonging to the camp—linen, shoes, provisions, such as biscuits, flour, sugar, coffee, &c.; all was consumed in a few minutes. The ambulances full of wounded were abandoned at Rezonville, and this when Bazaine had stated in his despatch "that the French remained masters and mistresses of the field,"*—all the above being suppressed.—Towards 10 A.M. next morning his different corps-d'armée occupied the following positions, viz. :—

The 2d corps, the crests of the plateau of Rozeriulles, above the routed escending towards Metz, in front of the valley of Schatel-St.-Germain; a battalion of the 97th of the line at St. Ruffine and Jussy watching the entrances to these villages, and keeping up communication with Metz.

The cavalry division of Valebrègue, belonging to 2d corps, encamped in the valley of Schatel, the Forton division of cavalry of reserve at the mill of

* It is worthy of remark that the King and Count Bismarck visited the ambulances abandoned by the French on the 16th at Rezonville on the 17th, and the latter said to a wounded French officer, "Ah! if we had chassepots and you our needle-guns, the war would be ended in fifteen days;" then adding, "If you had our generals it would be finished also all the same, but in a different way for us." This was written down at the time.

Longnau, and the artillery park between Moulins and Longueville.

To give strength to the positions, shelter trenches and bastions were constructed in front of the 2d and 3d corps; the two houses at Point-du-Jour were fortified and joined by an earthwork; the grand'-gardes and petits-postes were placed in the quarries beyond the road.

To the right of the 2d corps, and on a prolongation of the plateau towards the north, the 3d corps established itself, its front leaning on the farms of Moscou, Leipsic, and La Folie (ominous names for the French), and occupying with its infantry the woods of Genivaux in front. The division of cavalry, sheltered by the crests, was in rear of the farms.

On the right of the 3d corps, the 4th corps was in position at Montigny-la-Grange and Amanvilliers, a division in rear of the line, and the cavalry in rear of the last-named village.

Finally, the 6th corps, then at Verneville, now occupied the villages of Jerusalem, St. Privat, and Roncourt, forming the right wing; an outpost also at Melancourt, its left joining the right of the 4th corps near Amanvilliers; the 94th of the line occupying St.-Marie-aux-Chenes in front. This line, of more than seven miles, was very strong on the left and in the centre; the right alone had no natural support, and called by military men "*en l'air.*" The Imperial

Guard was posted at the Col-de-Lessy, between the two forts Plappeville and St. Quentin, at a distance of about five miles from St. Privat, and with it was posted the artillery of reserve. Marshal Bazaine had his head-quarters at the house of his friend M. de Bouteiller, formerly deputy for the Moselle, and of whom we shall hear more hereafter.

New Dispositions of the Germans.

It was now pretty evident that no attempt would be made by Bazaine to attack the Germans to the eastward, and the head-quarters of the King were shifted to Pont-à-Mousson, he arriving there at a late hour on the evening of the 16th. On hearing the great and last distant cannonade, and knowing how urgently the prostrated 3d and 10th corps must be in need of support, he at once ordered the 7th, remainder of 8th and 12th (Royal Saxons), who were encamped to the eastward, to cross the river without delay and join the troops encamped to the westward. The 2d corps was ordered up with all haste from the frontier; the 4th corps away to the south, and also the 3d army, under the Crown Prince of Prussia, were both ordered to halt; only the 1st corps and the 3d cavalry division were to remain a little to the east of the river, and the following orders were issued from Gorze and sent off by orderly officers from head-quarters with the greatest speed :—

"*At* 11.30 P.M.—*To General Manstein.*—9th corps will take a position if possible at daybreak at about a mile and a half to the north-west of Gorze on the plateau.

"*To the Crown Prince of Saxony at Pont-à-Mousson.*—12th corps will immediately march for Mars-la-Tour, passing by Thiancourt."

"*To the Prince Augustus of Wurtemberg at Bernecourt.*—The Guard will march immediately for Mars-la-Tour, passing by Beney-St.-Benoit and Chambley. The corps will get into position to the right of the 12th, when its forms rendezvous."

At the same time the King was informed of these dispositions. No more orders were sent to the 4th corps, which was intended for the offensive against Toul; the 2d corps was already marching by its late orders on Pont-à-Mousson, and the King had besides, as above stated, given orders to 7th, 8th, and 9th corps.

The great despatch of Prince Frederick Charles had arrived at the King's head-quarters at two o'clock in the morning of the 17th, giving the dispositions he had made on account of the victory; and saying that he expected the enemy would renew the battle on the 17th, hereby showing how critical he still considered affairs.

This made the King change the time of his departure from 6 A.M., as arranged, to 4 A.M.

Attended by Prince Frederick Charles, who had just arrived, the Prince of Mecklenburg, Count Bismarck, General von Moltke, and others, he drove first by the road which runs northwards towards Gorze, a little rock-bound village built in a ravine, which ascends from the valley of the Moselle to the plateau of Rezonville; and when the carriage of the King arrived here he found the street completely blocked up with ammunition waggons, commissariat carts, and ambulances, coming in different directions. The King saluted the wounded, and all stood uncovered. His carriage had stopped, and he now changed his cap for his helmet, put on his sash, and mounted his horse, followed by his suite. He then rode to Flavigny, and pushed on between Rezonville and Vionville, and from this point the French could be seen beyond Gravelotte. There seemed much activity among their troops, and some skirmishers appeared on the brow of a hill; consequently some German cavalry scouts were pushed forward, who found the heights deserted, and all was again quiet among the enemy's troops.

While cavalry scouts along the whole German line were persistently watching the movements of the enemy, the heroic old King reviewed those troops who had covered themselves with glory. The horse artillery and cavalry, as they had risen up from their bivouac, first rode past, and then he himself rode up

to the regiments of infantry. It was a most solemn and impressive duty he had to perform, to thank the remnants of those troops who had shown such heroism, but painful and depressing was it to notice the enormous sacrifices which success had demanded.

Critics have some of them blamed the Germans for not having been content, when they had succeeded in cutting the southernmost road and rendered the other one parallel to it, next to useless.

We have just mentioned how critical the Red Prince considered the position, and one must now notice the extreme caution that was displayed, for the King, in order to consider gravely the next steps to be taken, held here a council of war composed of—

Prince Frederick Charles, commanding 2d Army,
General Steinmetz, commanding 1st Army,
Count von Moltke, Chief of Staff,
General von Stiehle, } Chiefs of the Staff, 1st and
General von Sperling, } 2d Army,

who came to the conclusion that Bazaine would adopt one of the following plans :—

(1.) He might, thinking the Germans too much weakened and incapable of preparing again a new attack, throw himself, reinforced by troops drawn from the great fortress of Metz, upon the Germans before they could bring up more corps.

(2.) He might hasten the retreat of his army towards Verdun, as the more northern of the two direct

roads was not yet absolutely closed, as also the more circuitous route through Briey, or by the most northern of all, by Thionville, should he make up his mind to retreat northwards.

Although, by the first of these routes, he would be exposed to great danger on account of the facility with which the Germans could call up more corps, it must now have become evident to Bazaine that unless something were done at once he must be cut off from communication with Paris, and all means of relief.

(3.) He might take up a strong position on the defensive, in place of using the two most northern roads; but this supposition was not so favoured as the others, and the German cavalry scouts were ordered to immediately report any movement of the enemy which might indicate the adoption of either of the above plans.

But the morning hours passed without any visible change in the enemy's camp. On the contrary, farther and farther he seemed retiring from his advanced positions, and the supposition gained ground that he was meditating on the last plan, and probably under the belief that a relieving army from Chalons, or the more north-western provinces, would advance to his support, and thus the Germans might be placed between two fires, and have to fight at a great disadvantage. In fact, as might have happened to the

English in June 1815, had Ney at Quatre Bras, after the first attack (and before Weimar was heavily reinforced), attacked again, and Napoleon after Ligny immediately pressed his advantage in the right direction.

Supposing this to be the real intention of Bazaine, the German council of war came to the conclusion that it would be absolutely necessary to attack him at once, and utilise the numerical superiority they could bring against him before the arrival of any relieving army. This is the real reply offered for consideration of adverse critics.

The 12th Royal Saxon and the two Prussian corps mentioned before had in the meantime crossed the Moselle, the King was therefore enabled to take measures for attacking the enemy at once, and to assign to each corps its position. We have seen that the Guards and 12th corps were "*en route*" for Mars-la-Tour, and the 2d making a march which we shall see hereafter will bring us back in memory to Crawford's before Talavera; its advance guard had nearly reached Pont-à-Mousson, consequently it was hoped that the King, counting this, would have eight corps, and we shall see later on what a glorious part it took in the conflict. At three o'clock in the afternoon the Prince established his head-quarters at Buxieres, and the King arranged his line of battle for the morrow as follows, and reckoning

from right to left—7th, 8th, 9th, Guards, and 12th corps.

3d and 10th, which had suffered so terribly on the 16th, were in second line.

As there was great uncertainty in the enemy's plans, the movements of the Germans were to commence in direct echelon of corps from the left.

No. 8 was to move on the right rear of No. 9, and No. 7 to form the pivot in case of a wheel to the right, with the divisions massed and corps of artillery between them. The 12th would attack if retreating, and if they were going to fight in position the above wheel to the right would be made.

Having given the general plan to be adopted according to circumstances, a more detailed one follows in the orders of the King, viz. :—

"The three corps of the 1st line, 12th, Guards, and 9th, will advance northwards and eastwards on the morning of the 18th, endeavouring to occupy the various villages; should they succeed in doing so, both roads will be in possession of the Germans, and the corps will wheel eastwards.

"Scouts of the 5th and 6th division of cavalry will be pushed along to the environs of Conflans, and the following movements will be made :—

"The 12th Royal Saxons will march on Jarny.

"The Guard will march on Doncourt.

"The 9th will march on St. Marcel.

"The 8th will support the 9th corps on its right rear, as before stated, and in the direction of Rezonville by the deep hollow roads near Mouza, and by the wood of St. Arnold.

"The 7th corps will proceed by the valley of the Manse, in the wood of Vaux, and to the south of Gravelotte, and form the extreme right of the line of battle, the turning pivot.

"The 10th corps and 5th division of cavalry will be in rear of the 12th Saxons, in reserve.

"The 3d corps and 6th division of cavalry will also be in reserve, in rear of and between the Guard and 9th corps."

The 2d corps will hasten its march, and direct it on Rezonville.

It will finally be remarked that the 7th and 8th corps, being on the southern flank, had orders to get into a covered position and watch the enemy's advance. The King of Prussia had thus, on the morning of the battle, seven *corps-d'armée*, and with the 2d, eight corps, two divisions of cavalry of reserve, one division of cavalry of the Guard, one division of cavalry of the 12th corps under General Zur-Lippe, and the 1st division of cavalry of the 1st Army—in all, about 240,000 men.

On account of the numerous faults committed on the side of the French, they only actually opposed to this army four corps, and those already sorely tried.

The King remained on the 17th on the battlefield of the previous day, until, on account of the lateness of the hour, offensive movements of the enemy could no longer be expected that day, and then he returned to Pont-à-Mousson. The next morning he hastened again as early as 4 A.M. back to the field.

Let us now examine the French positions on the morning of the 18th August.

Marshal Bazaine had indeed given to his troops a strong position to the north, west, and south of Metz, and if the defences were made between the 16th and 18th, it ought to have proved (without the faults committed) a triumph of engineering, and such as might, for rapidity of construction, be compared to Beauregard's splendid defence of Petersburg in the war between North and South (when Meade had skilfully crossed the Chickahominy and pontooned the James' River), thus forcing General Grant to set down before Richmond and take it by a regular siege. The left wing extended in front of, and above the villages of Jussy and Vaux, on the plateau commanded by Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville, and along a continuous chain of heights past the farms of Point-de-Jour, St. Hubert,* Moscou, Leipzig, La Folie, and Martigny-la-Grange, to the village of

* Considering Gravelotte and the positions along the opposite heights, St. Hubert was really the "*tête-de-pont.*"

Amanvilliers, the centre occupying the country to the east of Verneville; the line then crossed at Jerusalem, the road from Metz to Briey and Verdun, and ran on to the village of St. Privat, and still further north to Roncourt, the former of these last two being considered as really the "*point-d'appui*" of the right wing, and having a deep fall in the ground in its rear and thick woods; the western slope falling generally very gradually.

Large forces can approach the position without difficulty, only by two points; the first and easier by Verneville, the other on either side of the southern road from Metz to Gravelotte, which is commanded by St. Hubert.

The right wing was attackable, and has been objected to by many on account of its isolation, and the difficulty, as was supposed, of reinforcing it from the rear. There were, however, two good roads leading to it, one from Amanvilliers, and the other in rear of the position, both in the hands of the French. The total length of the line from the Moselle to St. Privat was over eight miles, occupied from left to right by the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 6th corps, with the Imperial Guard and reserve artillery in rear of the left.

This line, owing to the value of a continuous chain of heights, had an extensive fire-swept space in front, with no cover, and the solid masonry of the villages was very strong indeed; and all had been connected

by shelter trenches, and the villages put in a state of defence. The woods had *abattis*, and at the most favourable points batteries had been erected.

Deducting the cavalry escorting a convoy, which seems to have been despatched by Bazaine to Briey, and the 20,000 killed and wounded at the two battles of Borny, and Mars-la-Tour, he should have had to occupy it over 150,000 men, 500 guns, and 160 mitrailleuses. The advanced troops occupied the woods and farms, St. Hubert, Verneville, St. Ail, St.-Marie-aux-Chênes.

Besides the objections to the right wing's position, there extended along the rear for some distance declivities and forests, particularly as far as Amanvilliers; and another defect was, that it left to the French no other retreat than on Metz.

Bazaine also took into consideration that on account of the ground, cavalry movements would not take place, although some of it was practicable, he therefore counted 20,000 Germans as useless, and also that the King could only oppose to him seven corps, as several writers have stated, because the 2d corps was only "*en marche*" from the frontier; whereas we have seen that this splendid corps was to be at the disposal of the King. Finally, Bazaine seems to have calculated all as about 200,000 men and 650 guns, such not being, according to his opinion, a great numerical superiority, seeing the immensely

strong defensive position he had taken up; and as it seems now, self-reliant and confident of success, through Marshal Niel's tactics, which he was about to employ.

Movements of the Germans.

The troops of the 1st line, with the Saxon and Prussian cavalry in front, executed without opposition the movements they were ordered to make on the morning of the 18th. They advanced, and were able to report with certainty to head-quarters that the enemy was not retiring from, but, on the contrary, apparently drawing nearer to, Metz as a base.

On this morning, however, neither the extent nor strength of the French position could be known to the Germans. Their only knowledge was as to the extreme southern end of the French left wing, where the most advanced bodies of both French and Germans had remained since the battle of the 16th. Those German corps which had now advanced to Jarny, Doncourt, and St. Marcel, and had found the direct southern roads free from the enemy, received further orders.

"10 A.M.—The 9th corps will direct itself on Vèrneville for La Folie; if the enemy is found there with its right, the corps will engage at once, but only with its artillery.

"10.15 A.M.—The Guard will continue its march on

Verneville, and take its position in support of the 9th corps, which marches towards La Folie against enemy's right. It is desirable to reconnoitre the ground to the left, that is, towards Amanvilliers and St.-Privat-la-Montagne, and send reports promptly."

It was only at half-past ten that doubts were cleared up, and known that the enemy was going to fight on the plateau between Point-de-Jour and Montigny-la-Grange. The following opinion of his Majesty was then sent out by field-telegraph to commanders, viz.:—

"The King is of opinion that the 12th corps and the Guard, should take the direction of Batily, in order to come up with enemy at St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, in case he should be retiring by Briey, and in order to attack him near Amanvilliers. In case he rests on the heights, the attack will be made simultaneously by the 1st Army of General Steinmetz, by the Bois-de-Vaux and Gravelotte; by the 9th corps, by the woods of Gennivaux and Verneville; and by the left wing of the 2d Army towards the north."

The King took up his quarters near Rezonville, and Prince Frederick Charles near Vionville, and to whom all reports were to be sent direct. After this the following orders were issued by field-telegraph:—

"11 A.M.—*To General Manstein, commanding 9th corps.*—The Guard is at this moment receiving orders to advance to the attack by Verneville, on Amanvilliers, on the right wing of the enemy. Any serious

engagement by the 9th corps should be delayed in the event of the enemy's front stretching more to the north, until the Guard attacks by Amanvilliers."

"11.30. A.M.—*To Prince Augustus of Wurtemburg.* —The enemy is ranged in battle on the heights stretching from the Bois-de-Vaux, and above Leipzig. The Guard will hasten its march and push on to Amanvilliers, and then make a serious and turning attack against the enemy's right wing. At the same time the 9th will attack La Folie, the Guard can also take the route of Habonville. The 12th corps marches on St.-Marie-aux-Chênes."

"11.45 A.M.—*To the Prince of Saxony.*—The 12th corps is ordered to continue its march on St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, keeping the cavalry to guard its flank on the side of Briey, and beyond Conflans, and if possible to launch forward some of its cavalry into the valley of the Moselle, to cut the railway and telegraph running to Thionville. The 7th, 8th, 9th corps and Guard will attack the enemy, who is in position on the heights of Leipzig, and stretching to the Bois-du-Vaux, his back turned on Metz. In the 2d line advance supports 3d, 10th, and 2d corps."

"12 *Noon.—To General Voigts-Rehtz.*—The enemy is on the heights from Bois-de-Vaux by Leipzig and Folie; we attack him to-day, Guard by Amanvilliers, 9th by La Folie, 7th and 8th also in front on our right. The 10th corps will sustain the attack towards

St. Ail, the 3d Verneville, the 2d marches on Rezonville."

"12 *Noon.—To General Fransecki.*—The 2d corps will march from Buxieres to Rezonville as a reserve to the right wing; the 1st and 2d armies attack the enemy to-day."

12.15.—"*To Von Göben and Zastrow.*—As soon as the battle shall begin, the 7th and 8th corps will move out of their position and engage the enemy with as long a front as possible."

The reader will now see that according to the plan in operation, the whole army present was in fact to execute a counter march by its right, envelope the enemy's right wing, and force it back on Metz. This was not, however, as some have supposed and written, all; for the storming of the heights of Pont-du-Jour, St. Hubert, and Moscou, at about 8 P.M., on the French left, was considered necessary by Count von Moltke to be decisive.

In consequence of the extended position of the French, and the attack of five German corps in front, a battle ensued, which (as before stated) really is divisible into two battles, like those of Waterloo and Planchenoit. The northern one was fought by the 2d Army, under Prince Frederick Charles, the other by the troops under General Steinmetz of the 1st Army, one corps of the 2d Army (viz., 2d corps) coming up at the end as reserve to Steinmetz. The army of the

Prince fought most desperately round St. Privat against the French right wing in the north, where Canrobert and the 6th French corps was posted, which not only, as Major Pratt remarks in his notes, had no engineer park, but no artillery park either, both having been left at Chalons.

The army of General Steinmetz fought equally desperately to the south-east of Gravelotte against the French left wing, until the battlefield, owing to the two wings of the French having been driven in gradually, narrowed itself to a vast centre of their position; on the heights, with the three farms, La Folie, Leipzig, and Moscou, out of which the enemy retreated in the night or early morning, in consequence, as we shall hereafter see, of the victorious advance of, and storming of these heights by, Fransecki's 2d corps (Pomeranians), brought up by General von Moltke (at same time as St. Privat fell), and was the very corps on which Bazaine had not counted, but left out of his reckoning.

CHAPTER VIII.

Battle of Gravelotte, St. Privat, with continued Field Telegrams.

Battle No. 1 to the West and North of the French Position.

As soon as the vanguard of the 9th corps had occupied the village of Verneville, shortly after 11 A.M., the ground in front was all alive with men, and several battalions advanced from the direction of Amanvilliers. General Manstein's artillery was ordered to take position, and the infantry to penetrate through the wood to the north of Verneville as far as its distant end, and then the artillery to open fire alone.

But the enemy's opposing force was far superior. Numerous batteries in position at Martigny-la-Grange kept up an incessant and strong fire upon the Germans, which very soon afterwards extended towards the north, as far as St.-Privat-la-Montagne. From the more advanced positions, batteries, mitrailleuses, and infantry kept this up so strongly that the Germans commenced to suffer very heavy losses. One

battery of horse-artillery (Captain Kœnig's), occupying a very exposed position, lost in a short time nearly a hundred horses; but like the Congreve battery which did so much execution among the French at Waterloo, and the self-sacrificing French horse-artillery in the Crimea, all his guns continued in action, although he had to shift his position. Immediately after the beginning of the cannonade Prince Charles had started in the direction of the firing, and from a rising ground near Verneville he observed what was occurring, and at once sent an order for the Guards. By one o'clock some regiments had arrived one after the other, and its batteries were ordered into position between the villages of Habonville and St. Ail, in close proximity to the artillery of the 9th corps. The entire advanced posts of the French army were now already in action, but of the Guard only the artillery, however, was ordered to commence. Its infantry was to reserve its fire until the 12th Saxon corps could approach and take part in the fighting, but the infantry of the Guard took advantage of the artillery covering them, to get into as favourable a position as possible for the beginning of their attack. On the approach of the Saxons later on, when the first shell from this corps burst in their front, they enthusiastically rushed forward with a loud hurrah under the enemy's fire, dashing into the little copse near Habonville and St. Ail. Carried away by enthusiasm, the

men of the 1st division turned into a ravine, which offered also a more covered position, and over their heads the shot flew in a higher trajectory.

It has been said that the Crown Prince of Saxony led the left wing of the attacking force, and had to make a longer detour than the other corps, pushing on in a more northerly direction than was expected by him, and the reader will probably recognise the prudent course he now took. Owing to the uncertainty which prevailed as to the most northern point of the enemy's right wing, the Prince deemed it advisable to divide his corps, and he therefore ordered one division to march in a more northerly direction, to prevent a turning movement of the enemy by any possibility. The other division was to march in closer proximity to the Guards. As soon as some regiments of these faced St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, these latter became aware of their approach, and they immediately united in storming the village, which was in reality defended only by the 94th of the line. This was the advanced, and partly isolated position of the French on the west, and in front of their real one on the heights, which extended in a line north and south. Most likely they did not intend holding it at any price, but still it had strong defences which the division Pape had to take. Breastworks of stones had been thrown up, and in rear of them stood the defenders in such sheltered positions that

only their heads and arms were exposed. They rested their rifles on the walls and kept up a murderous attack on the advancing Germans, but without the desired effect, for, however great the losses of these, the force of the attack was undiminished, although the casualties of the Germans were so great. Colonel von Eckert, the commander of the fusiliers, was killed; but so much the less would the assailants let slip the prize for which the sacrifices were made; and at last, making a final rush, the enemy vacated the village, retiring on St. Privat.

The Germans gained a great advantage by the capture of St. Marie, as their front attack could now be extended towards the north. As much as was at hand of the Saxon artillery and of the Guard was placed in position to the north and south of St. Marie, in order to make its influence felt and shake the position of Canrobert in St. Privat and Roncourt. This latter was bombarded only by the Saxon artillery, and was, as has been said, the extreme north of the French position, excepting a few troops at Melancourt; and, like St. Marie, it seemed not to have been provided with sufficient means for an independent defence, both these posts being situated so far away from the French main positions, and probably more to be used for reconnoitring than to resist a concentrated attack. Only half an hour's

cannonade later on, was sufficient to compel the French troops in Roncourt to give way; and it should be mentioned that a portion of the reserve now took part in the fighting; and an episode has been mentioned of one of the reserve batteries of horse-artillery, — that of a distant royal horse-battery, unsupported by cavalry, destroying a regiment of French cavalry, which had advanced upon it, mistaking it first for a squadron of cavalry. It is apprehended that the writer was carried away by his imagination, and savours very much of the Iron Duke's "Up, guards, and at them" at Waterloo (even mentioned by Sir Edward Creasy). In the first place, the horse-artillery would certainly not have been left unsupported. Secondly, even two squadrons of French cavalry, numbering nearly 300 sabres, would most certainly have taken the guns.

The danger gradually increasing to those in Roncourt of being cut off from their main body, they must soon retire on St. Privat, where their arrival would add to the strength of the place. This village of St. Privat, however, was destined later to become the scene of a terrible struggle.

It was evident that after the fall of St. Marie and Roncourt this position would be defended to the last. It stands on rather rising ground, and to the west and north there is little or nothing offering

cover to an attacking force, which can be exposed to a murderous fire. Between it and St. Marie, as also Roncourt, numerous low stone garden enclosures stretch for some distance, behind the stone walls of which stood the enemy; then came an open fire-swept space and lines of shelter trenches, the occupants of which were well supplied with small ammunition. An attack under these circumstances by the Germans seems now almost as foolhardy as that of the Russians on the Gravitza redoubt years afterwards; but was conducted with much more skill, which the Russians did not copy or profit by, with the sole exception of Scobeleff.*

However distant the Germans were from this position, it seemed evident to Prince Frederick Charles, from the batteries posted along the front, on the heights and trenches, that tremendous efforts would be required here to gain a little ground. In fact only great quantities of troops could succeed in surrounding the enemy's position, in front and flank, constantly requiring to be fed by strong supports. Between 3 and 4 P.M. neither the regiments of the

* It is incorrect to say that a rivulet or affluent of the Orne still further interfered with the position. This is nothing, and the Germans could advance without any natural obstacle. Although also in the south the valley of the Manse is spoken of, this is merely a three-feet ditch, and there is no water in it except close to Ars, where it is dammed up for some factories. In most places it is little obstacle even to artillery, and would not require either Bengal horse-artillery or Anderson's jumping guns of the Mutiny of 1857 to get over it.

Guards, with the exception of its 1st division (Pape), nor the main body of the Saxon corps, had arrived—the latter had even temporarily disappeared, having to make a longer detour.

With so much more vigour, therefore, was the artillery combat continued. Battery was added to battery whenever possible, and gradually pushed as much as it could be to the front. About 4 P.M. a solitary, and a little later several, French batteries ceased firing, silenced it appeared by fourteen batteries of the Guard, and the Germans now ventured to push forward some of their guns to within range of the infantry fire. Corresponding with this movement of the artillery, the line of the infantry brigade advanced several hundred feet forward, and the regiment of the 2d division of the guard arrived now, one after another, and were sent to the front without delay. No troops of the Saxons had yet appeared, with the exception of two regiments.

Prince Frederick Charles was for a time doubtful whether it would be advisable to order the immediate attack on St. Privat; when, however, the French were seen moving *en masse* in rear of the village, slightly to the north-east, and venturing to hope that during the time of an attack the Saxon regiments might arrive and join in it, upon these considerations, but reluctantly, the Prince, at about 5 P.M., ordered the advance of the infantry on St. Privat.

The Guards were led by the regiments Franz and Königin Augusta, advancing at the double. Out of the ravine arose bodies of troops, who rushed forward towards the fiery craters, but only for a few moments. Hardly had they advanced towards the enemy than he brought to bear on them a general and rapid fire from pits and shelter trenches on the fire-swept space. Numbers of officers and their men fell at once, but the others continued their deadly advance, and seemed only too ready to lay down their lives. On the left was the 1st division, and the same fate awaited them as on the right. Richer and richer became the harvest of death, and the wounded went down by tens and hundreds. The commanders were in front directing them in these critical moments; a little later not one of their heads was visible above those of their men. Some sank wounded with their horses, others had these shot under them, and within a circumference of some fifteen hundred feet the ground was choked with dead and wounded. It was impossible now to hear any words of command in close proximity, and useless to continue the firing on the German attacking side. Just as we found in the Davis square, in the Soudan, owing to the dense clouds of smoke, no aim could be taken, and the French were in their pits and shelter trenches. Unable to fire, and yet resolved not to give way, the Guards still advanced impetuously and fearlessly,

but a little later it seems evident that they would have turned had not Prince Frederick Charles, who had at the beginning of the attack repaired to a spot near the western gate of St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, observed the frightful losses. In order to prevent greater slaughter he gave the orders for a halt, and to fall back till the Saxon troops (the advanced guard of which was now in sight) could join in the attack. In the meantime the regiment of Fusilier Guards, which had been held in reserve, was attached to the left wing, and the artillery of the 10th corps in support, and which had drawn nearer to the front, got into position against St. Privat.

It was 6 P.M. when the 12th corps (the only one intact) had gained the environs to the north of Roncourt, and past 6 P.M. when they achieved their turning movement, got near to Roncourt, and cannonaded St. Privat. The division Lafont de Villiers, which defended the village, after the fighting of seven hours, retired, and the Germans captured it and followed the French towards St. Privat. After the halt of the Guards those officers who had horses still at their disposal, rode along addressing words of praise to their men. General Pape, before mentioned, lost two horses under him; one of his aides was killed at his side, the other wounded. Colonel Von Röder, Major Von Schmeling, Major Von Notz, Major Prince Salm, and other heroes, whose names

are too numerous to mention, here fell and breathed their last while the terrible din of battle continued to rend the air.

The guns had for some time been within the range of infantry fire, and the artillery losses were consequently increasing more and more, although they in their turn were inflicting losses on the French. More and more fires began to break out in the position of these latter, and more and more gaps in the German infantry, from the effect of the enemy's shell; and there appears strong evidence that the Germans had had to retire to the neighbouring ravine for a time, while the reinforcements of the Saxon main body was anxiously looked for.

At last, by seven o'clock, the Saxon regiments had advanced so far that the French position could now be attacked at St. Privat from two sides, and the darkness would soon set in, so that no further delay was desirable. The artillery of the 12th corps now came into action with sixteen more batteries, which with those of the Guards and some of the 10th made up the number to nearly 230 guns* against Canrobert, whose artillery had nearly now ceased firing, reserving, as he did, only fifteen rounds per gun for his retreat. Along the whole two lines the signal was now given to storm, when the convergent

* Napoleon estimated the proper number of guns at that time as 3 to 4 per 1000 men.

fire of all the above guns had made their influence felt; the Guards and Saxons advanced by echelon, got up to the village, and surrounded those French who would not surrender, and fought to the last. During this deadly advance from the west and north, the French infantry were firing eight to ten rounds per minute; the storming semicircle gradually narrowed, Brigadier-General Kraushauer was here killed, and the Saxons, only the more furious, rushed onwards to the goal. On arriving there they forced their way through the streets, reinforcements now arriving from the reserve (regiments of the 10th), which the King himself had ordered to the front, and even some detachments of the 3d. They forced their way into the houses and even rooms; they searched every hiding-place, and every corner was cleared by them. Those who did not surrender retreated into the woods in rear, and some fled towards the forts of Metz. The 28,000 men under Canrobert had been overcome by 68,000 Germans and the above number of guns before given.

For more than an hour both the above-named Marshal and L'Admirault had been sending gallopers praying Bazaine for help from the Imperial Guard and reserve artillery. At 7.30 only part of these marched to the plateau, but the 6th corps was already in retreat by the Saulnay road and the woods of Jaumont. The marshal conducted his

retreat with consummate ability and coolness, and in person; supported by a battery of position, established in the quarries of Amanvilliers, of sixty guns, placed one over the other as much as possible, and the 94th and 100th of the line, a division of cavalry (1st of the Reserve under General Barrail), and a brigade of dragoons of the 4th corps (L'Admirault's).

Let us now glance back at the fighting in the earlier part of the afternoon, immediately to the south of the above position. The 9th corps had in the meantime a not much less difficult task to execute and to sustain itself in front of Verneville. In fact, opposite to Martigny-la-Grange and Amanvilliers its position had become critical, where, it has been before stated, is a good key to the French position, practicable for large bodies of troops.

Between 3 and 4 P.M. no less than fifteen of its guns had become silenced and unserviceable by the superior force here of the French artillery, and the latter declare that seven of the guns were taken by them, the other eight, on account of defect in the harnessing, having remained with the Germans.* All the positions to which the German infantry had advanced were overwhelmed by the French artillery, as round the village of Verneville, &c., the mitrailleuses here producing deadly effect. The losses suffered by

* "The lost guns were taken by the 15th of the line and 2d chasseurs of the division Lorencez."—*French Despatch.*

this corps had weakened it so enormously that it could make no farther advance; in fact, it was a matter of doubt whether its troops could retain their position, if the French, encouraged by their inactivity, should charge them.

This consideration began to occupy the mind of the commander. It was therefore reinforced from the 3d corps, and just before the first attack on St. Privat at 5 P.M., two regiments, the Alexander. and Königin Elizabeth, had to be sent hastily from the Guard corps to its relief, and the King himself ordered up some artillery of the 3d corps to relieve the hardly-pressed German centre.*

This aid enabled it to sustain its positions. The enemy had retained his since 2 P.M.

* This suggestion was made by, and guns offered by, Von Alvensleben II.

CHAPTER IX.

Battle of Gravelotte, St. Privat—Conduct of the King and Von Moltke.

BATTLE NO. 2 TO THE WEST AND SOUTH OF FRENCH POSITION.

THE troops under General Steinmetz—the 7th and 8th corps, the advanced guards of which had been posted near to those of the French—had on the morning of the 18th retained a waiting attitude. They were not to leave their covered positions, nor take part in the battle before the other corps under Prince Frederick Charles should have engaged the French.

Marshal Bazaine held a position here with the 2d and part of the 3d corps upon the heights on each side of the road which runs between Metz and Gravelotte. This runs in a serpentine direction, and is in many places narrowed by steep heights which are pierced by numerous ravines. They rise from the base of the valley to from 200 to 600 feet, the farms of St. Hubert and Pont-du-Jour commanding it, as also Roserieuilles. Farther to the south

Jussy and Vaux ; that is to say, the whole ground between the road and the south and west, which played such an important part in the fighting, in fact, from Metz down to the banks of the Moselle, at the above points, about four and a half English miles from Metz. The whole of the French position had been so strongly fortified, that it seems permissible to inquire whether this was all done between the 16th and 18th. Any reconnoitring by the troops of General von Steinmetz on the positions had been repulsed with great vehemence.

The reader will notice that as long as the Germans were in uncertainty as to Bazaine's intentions, the above-mentioned position to the south of Metz was considered his left wing. So it was, and so it remained. But when, in consequence of the morning's march which the Prince's troops had made in a north-easterly direction, it was ascertained that the Marshal had given up the two southern roads to the west of Gravelotte, and when a further turning march of those corps northward had been ordered to find out the right wing of the French, then the significance of this position, as opposed to General von Steinmetz, changed considerably. Let us briefly consider this, remembering that his orders were, when he attacked, to do so on as long a front as possible.

In consequence of the movements of the three army corps of the Germans under the Red Prince,

the troops of the French centre, that is to say, those occupying the farms of Moscou and Leipzig, were not threatened by any immediate attack, because the most southern points towards which the march of the three corps was directed were situated to the north of those farms, rather towards Amanvilliers, Martigny-la-Grange, and Verneville. It therefore appeared certain that the troops of the French centre would be later on able to support their right wing, and that General Steinmetz would have to extend his attack northwards.

Thus the whole gravity of the fighting that must ensue was gradually more apparent in the course of the day. About noon he heard the boom of the guns in the north, a clear indication that the 9th corps was in action. Immediately he ordered the artillery to get into position, and the batteries of the 7th corps emerged first from their covered position in the woods. In advance were fifty guns, their wheels sinking deeply in the mud as they moved, and in rear again came thirty more. The horses had a hard task to drag them up the heights, which extend to the south-east of Gravelotte, and were nearly dead beat with their exertions. Half way a short halt was made. They then advanced with precision along the untrodden ground up to the crest of the heights, which commanded that end of the French position. At the same time the

batteries of the 8th corps advanced from *their* position between Rezonville and Gravelotte with more than fifty guns, and took positions on the flank of the batteries of the other (7th) corps, commencing to engage the French batteries on the opposite heights, and distant about one and a half English mile, and on the other side of the winding and deep hollow road running from Metz, which has been already described.

This continued for about an hour, at the end of which time the German batteries had proved their superiority, for their force and precision of fire had silenced, or nearly so, many of the French, which had gradually commenced to slacken for more than half an hour. Here and there one could see some retiring; and such rapid success was the cause of much congratulation in Steinmetz's corps.

In the meantime the infantry of the two corps had also operated successfully. All around in the direction extending from the banks of the Moselle near Ars, to the woods which separated the two hostile armies, and to the north of Gravelotte; here some regiments, there whole divisions, had advanced, and two regiments of the 7th corps which were in position most to the south near Ars-sur-Moselle, in cover, rushed forwards northwards. The French, who occupied the village of Vaux, did not feel strong enough at the moment to resist the sudden on-

slaught. Elated with their success the Prussians pressed further forwards to the village of Jussy, which is situated one English mile in rear of Vaux. The streets were there instantly cleared, and the Prussian troops fortified their position by a couple of guns, which they there and then mounted. The other regiments of the same corps remained for some time longer in rear of the wooded valleys between Gravelotte and Vaux.

But the whole infantry of the 8th corps were now involved in a hot fight. The woods north of Gravelotte, into which its battalions had now to advance, had been strongly barricaded. Trees had been felled, immense logs of wood had been piled up, rifle shelters constructed; and in the wood itself was a strong body of the advanced guard. A hand-to-hand fight and sanguinary struggle now ensued, which lasted a long time, for soon the combatants, owing to alternate successes, got mixed up, and fighting pell-mell; but some German troops in one part, who had met with less resistance than at others, managed to proceed further. They observed the wood clearing in their front, where they had to advance towards the heights, still stronger fortified; other parties of troops were still fighting desperately in the wood. These pushed their way through at last, and felt thus strong enough for a combined attack. Along the whole line the order was now

given to storm, but a superior force of the French met them, and their fierce onslaughts were repeatedly repulsed by Le Bœuf's corps (the 3d). They did not, however, stop to consider their losses; the heights had to be taken, and *must* be taken. Again and again the Germans were reformed and led onwards; again and again driven back by the murderous fire of the French and the now overwhelming onslaught of their masses. After immense losses the Germans got up the rise in front of the wood, where they came to a complete halt, for on the crest of other heights separated from them by a ravine in front, every point along the whole extent of these was covered by the French, who kept up a murderous fire.

Every one at last sees that a further advance would mean utter destruction, and so the fighting comes temporarily to an end. More than three hours had passed since the guns had first opened fire; the successes gained by the most heroic and persevering fighting were, however, comparatively great. The absolute ground which had been gained extended above one English mile in front of the former German position; moreover, the fire of the French had slackened a little. As the enemy became more quiet, the supposition gained ground that he had an intention of still further withdrawing.

But, strictly speaking, the positions which had

been vacated by the French were really only advanced posts. True, the troops here in the south had nearly gained as much as those in the north, by the storming of St.-Marie-aux-Chênes; the really hardest fighting in this south portion of the battle-field had yet to commence.

About this time General Von Steinmetz despatched aides, one to report to the King the taking of the first line of heights to the north-east of Gravelotte, &c., the other to Lieutenant-General Von Hartmann, commanding the 1st cavalry division, with the following order :—

"Lieutenant-General Hartmann will advance with two regiments and horse-artillery from his position in the reserve. The cavalry will at once reconnoitre and try and make out what is going on on the French side; should they find that the enemy is withdrawing, they will pursue a short distance with horse-artillery."

This seems to have been a curious order considering the ravine separating the hostile armies.

It was 4 P.M. when the horse-artillery and lancers advanced down the ravine towards the enemy's position. Hardly did the first gun emerge from the defile within sight of the French, when the force was greeted by terrible artillery and infantry fire. The supposition of General Von Steinmetz proved entirely unfounded, for Bazaine was not retiring, nor

had he any such intention of doing this, but had only given a more sheltered position to his batteries, while his infantry, as before, were in shelter trenches and other cover.

It was in vain that the German batteries recommenced firing; in vain that their guns advanced along the open, and came into action; they suffered in so doing far greater losses than they were able to inflict on the French. They could get no farther, and had to turn, and now everything in rear of them, even cavalry, had come to a dead halt in the defile. The King arrived soon after, and rode to its very entrance, followed by Count Bismarck and others, but it was out of his power to remove the block. The German batteries vied with each other in perseverance, and activity, from their widely extended position.

Far away the flames of the burning farm buildings could be seen, which had been set on fire by the shells; but from minute to minute the battle assumed a more critical aspect for the Germans.

Marshal Bazaine had now issued completely new orders.

No longer his troops were to act on the defensive; they were to attack with the greatest vigour. It would seem probable that under the impression caused by the reports sent to him from the north and south of the battlefield, he commenced to realise

the great danger in which his army was placed. To be surrounded on all sides, and forced back on Metz; to have lost all communications with the other French armies, in fact with the whole Empire, thoughts of this kind probably must have occurred to him, and urged him to bolder resolutions, to make greater demands on his troops, and to assume the offensive with as large masses as possible; so the French regiments now commenced storming forward, tirailleurs in front, with wild shouts; the whole crests of the heights vivid with flame in the direction of the wood, and down to the ravine. A spirit of rage and despair seemed to have taken possession of them; they gave heed to nothing, nor did anything seem now to stop their progress; they pressed forward, and still more forward, however much the Prussians endeavoured to bar the way.

At last they get over the low ground and come so near that most of the German shots tell, but nothing seems to stay their progress, although the ground is covered with their wounded. Nearer and nearer they approach the ground which the Germans have occupied; they gain at last the heights, and the former victors are now forced back by their maddened rush.

The German troops retreat to the open ground between them and Gravelotte, and into the very

streets of the village, and along the roads leading from it right and left.

It is difficult to now bring them to a halt, and more so to re-form them, for there is nearly a panic, and no wonder; for after having succeeded in doing this, thanks to their good discipline, some of their battalions have the appearance of little more than companies.

It was now a most critical moment for the Germans. The attacking force of the French might assume—who could tell?—greater proportions. Who could know the exact number of troops which from inside Metz might stream out at the word of command to take part in the battle? The Germans had therefore to be prepared for every eventuality. Orders were at once given to fortify the position in rear of the troops, and companies of sappers were hastily pushed forward to throw up defences in front of Gravelotte in order to give support to a defence which seemed now necessary. This work was carried on with such superhuman efforts by the sappers, that it probably saved the Germans.

The reserve had already been called to the front. The 2d corps had not yet arrived, but was on its way to the battlefield. It had been on the march since the small hours of the morning, and would have made no less than twenty English miles on its arrival, besides its unparalleled march on the preceding day.

The troops composing it were the Pomeranians, troops, it is true, who had never yet refused to do their utmost, and self-reliant to a degree seldom met with in the hour of danger. Who could, however, foresee what might happen in the meanwhile, and before their arrival?

The King, seeing quickly the desperate state of affairs, now despatched orderly officers towards the west. General Fransecki, the commander of the 2d corps, received the news from them, and promised to press forward with all speed, and here again called on his men for a supreme effort.

Another hour passed away. The German batteries had at last been able to stop the farther advance of the French. The regiments of the 7th, as well as those of the 8th corps, had been re-formed and led again to the front, and things began to look a little more favourable for the Germans. They dashed up the heights before each corps in order to secure the glory of the day. The King and Von Steinmetz witnessed their onslaught. But as if by enchantment, what seemed like the din of hell again broke forth, if possible more terrible than before. The comparative calm which had prevailed for a time was perhaps the cause of this; but the tremendous outpour of fire had never been before equalled. The opposite slopes flamed as if lit by thousands of flashes of lightning, and the dusk of the declining day en-

hanced this awful scene as clouds of smoke overhung the battlefield. Down from the crest of the heights, and up from the low ground, and from the tiers of shelter trenches on the slopes, came terrific fire from shell, mitrailleuse, and small arms. A trembling above and below; and what one saw and heard seemed almost to partake of the supernatural.

It was too much even for a Von Moltke! and the King, at his request, sent off an aide-de-camp to stay the attack. But hardly had he galloped more than twenty strides when the German battalions came down the slope torn, defeated, and shattered. Then distinctly visible from the higher ground, where the King had halted, tottered one stream of defeated, disordered troops, in greater and greater haste, the last of them at the run. Riders galloped along, vehicles of all kinds passed rapidly, some artillery appeared in retreat, and squadrons had completely turned. Nobody seemed answerable for what he did, and every one was carried away at the moment.*

The fire of the French now began to extend considerably to the north of Gravelotte from the direction of the farms of Leipzig and Moscou to the place where the King and his staff were halting, and the shells burst in the immediate vicinity. A splinter

* The French declare that the Germans at this stage sent to clear the bridges over the Moselle in case of need.

wounded an aide-de-camp of the Minister of War, General Von Roon (whose son fell on this day); the horse of Count Perponcher, steward to the King, was killed under him, and the King's danger was now extreme. It was indeed time for his Majesty to change his place. Partly persuaded, partly led away mechanically by General Von Roon, the heroic old soldier turned backwards, and selected a spot more in rear, and nearer Rezonville, and now came another hour of uncertainty, fear, and expectation.

Prince Frederick Charles, the Grand Duke of Weimar (think, reader, of Quatre Bras and he of this name waiting for reinforcements also), Count Bismarck, Generals Von Roon, Dönhoff, and others were amongst the suite of the King, all silent and anxious. But where was General Von Moltke??? In the words of an eye-witness, a colonel of the artillery of the Guard, it is thus described: "Far away in the distance he is seen soon, where cheers and shouts meet him! Where the Pomeranians are following with enthusiasm his glittering sword!!!"

Yes! General Von Fransecki had come! One of his divisions was already getting into position near Gravelotte and a little in rear of it the other division. General Von Moltke, guided by the dust raised by it, had hastened to meet the 2d corps. When the men in the leading ranks recognised him, they raised such a cheer that it could be heard amidst

the surrounding din; but when the General drew his sword and addressed a few words of encouragement to the men, urging forwards his horse in front of them, and in the direction of the heights, the double-quick of the Pomeranians now became nearly a race. Another German writes relating the meeting:—

"Does the chief of the general staff urge his horse into the thick of the fray? ask the officers in astonishment. Quickly his aides-de-camp form around him, and succeed in drawing him (whose life is so necessary to victory) away from the front, and leading him to a safer place of observation."

Forwards now press the Pomeranians, led by their commander, General Von Fransecki, along the path pointed out to them by the hero of heroes, and soon they descend into the dark ravine and woods in front. The night is now fast falling, but the flames of fire light up their road, showing them the object of their attack, and they now begin to ascend. Everywhere around the bugles sound the "Forward! Forward!! Forward!!!"

The dark heights have been more than ever lighted up again, from the long winding lines of shelter trenches, and the French seem rather surprised at this sudden and third attack, and are now in double activity.

But the last great effort must now be made. The shrill sound of the chassepots, the rattling of the

mitrailleuses, the cracking of the needle-guns, the terrific boom of the artillery, the bugle calls, the shrieking words of command, and hurrahs, are all mixed up in what seems an infernal din among flame and lightning.

> "The bolts of Jove thick and terrific fly,
> And blaze and bellow through the trembling sky:
> Winds, thunder, lightning through both armies drove
> Their course impetuous from the hands of Jove."
>
> —HESIOD (740 B.C.)

For some little time it thus rages while the Mecklenburg "*Zeus*" looks on in silence. At last he seems satisfied and says, "*It is over!*" Then putting spurs to his horse he gallops to the place where he knows the King to be, while gradually the firing behind him gets lesser and lesser, and he knows that the Pomeranians have got up the heights, and planted their standard there, on the third side of Metz.

The King was surrounded by his suite, sitting near the western entrance to Rezonville; a large building hard by was burning, and as it was now getting quite dark, was fed by some inflammable material. Most of the suite were in little groups, but some still on horseback. There was a general silence, for what in such an anxious moment could they have to say to each other? The galloping of an approaching horse was heard; another moment

and General von Moltke, catching sight of the King, advanced with rapid steps, and in a firm and loud voice announced, "*Eure Majestät, wir haben gesiegt; der Feind zieht sich zurück.*" *

TELEGRAM.

"*King to Queen.*

"BIVOUAC near REZONVILLE,
"9.30 P.M., *18th August.*

"The French army was attacked by the army under my command to-day to the west and north of Metz, and after nine hours' desperate fighting completely overthrown, cut off from communication with Paris and their lines elsewhere, and thrown back on Metz. WILHELM."

* "Your Majesty, we have conquered! The enemy is in retreat!"

CHAPTER X.

Resumé of battle events—Remarks—Comments by various writers—Bazaine's despatches to Emperor and M'Mahon.

RÉSUMÉ.

Battle No. 1, in the North.

(1.) On the morning of the 18th August first comes the occupation of the villages and towns, ordered on the previous night, and to the north and north-east of the Doncourt and Gravelotte roads. A report is made as to the state of things, and orders are given for a wheel eastward at 10.30 A.M., the cavalry to endeavour to get round the French right, into the valley of the Moselle, to destroy the communication by rail between Metz and Thionville and the telegraph. This to be accomplished by the cavalry of the 12th Saxon corps.

(2.) The continuation of this movement. Occupation by 9th corps of the ground round about Verneville by 11 A.M., the whole army having so splendidly manœuvred as to have effected an entire change of front (without any difficulty occurring)

by noon, at which time the battle had commenced. Heavy losses of the above 9th corps up to 2 P.M. Prince Frederick Charles observing this, from above Verneville, at once orders advance of the Guards, and to confine itself to artillery practice. By one o'clock all the advanced posts of the French are in action. Saxons divided into two portions by Crown Prince, one to scour northward, the other to march in closer proximity to the Guards left. Storming by the latter and Saxons of St.-Marie-aux-Chênes by half-past three. The Germans have 250 guns in action by four o'clock.

(3.) Attack of main positions now commenced; the artillery of the 9th, and Guard, get into position to the north and south of St. Marie in order to make their influence felt, and with some of the 10th corps artillery to shake the position of St. Privat.

By 4.30 P.M. some of the French batteries are silenced, and the Germans advance even within infantry range.

Towards 5 P.M. an inexplicable movement seems to be taking place at St. Privat, and the Prince, thinking to decide the day (as some state), orders soon after the advance of the Guards on St. Privat, led by Franz and Königin Augusta regiments; terrible slaughter occurring, they are halted, and evidence would seem here to prove that they made their way back to the ravine to await the arrival of the Saxons;

calling up of the Fusilier Guards from the reserve, and the rest of the 10th corps artillery at once; at about 6 P.M. the 12th Saxons arrive near Roncourt, which they cannonade, and drive the French from thence on to the *point-d'appui* of their right wing, St. Privat.

(4.) At about 7 P.M. combined attacks of Guards and Saxons by north and west of St. Privat; General Kraushauer is killed; the Germans press on and gain the village, where they are assisted by regiments of the 10th and 3d corps.

At 8 P.M. the 6th corps, forming the right wing, retreats. The 9th corps sustains itself all day with difficulty before Verneville; at four o'clock its position is critical, and fifteen of its guns disabled; is reinforced by regiments Alexander and Königin Elizabeth and some artillery and infantry of the 3d corps, enabling it to hold its position till nightfall.

Battle No. 2, in the South.

(1.) Up to noon the 7th and 8th corps await the sound of the guns in the north. About noon they are heard, and they then get their artillery up the heights in front of the French, and by about 1.30 the superiority of this is proved against the latter; occupation of Vaux and Jussy by the 7th corps, who fortify these; desperate fighting between the 8th corps of Germans and some of the French 3d corps

in the woods and beyond to the north of Gravelotte; one mile gained in the south by 3 P.M., but main position not yet attacked; in fact, about as much gained by 4 P.M. as in the north.

(2.) Some idea of French retiring strikes Von Steinmetz, who orders horse-artillery and cavalry to advance by the ravine; terrible slaughter and confusion occurs; block in the ravine; arrival of the King and Von Moltke.

Advance of the French, driving back the Germans towards Gravelotte, and the right and left of the village itself; critical position of these; sappers ordered forward to fortify the position in front of village, and again in rear of the troops.

The reserve has been already called up, and the King despatches orderly officers to the West to General Fransecki to hasten up the 2d corps.

(3.) The German batteries at last are able to stop the French advance; the regiments of the 7th and 8th corps are re-formed and again led forward.

The fighting now becomes more terrible than ever before, in any part of the two battlefields. The Germans are thrown back in great confusion, and the King at the request of Count Von Moltke sends to stay the advance and slaughter. Artillery and vehicles of many descriptions are now retiring, even squadrons in retreat, and the King and his staff in danger, having to retire to the neighbourhood of Rezonville;

General von Moltke is now missed as the night begins to fall, but shortly after is seen at a distance leading the 2d corps, Fransecki's Pomeranians, who have just arrived on the field.

(4.) They are soon seen advancing at the run, and deploying in front of Gravelotte; onwards they go down the ravine and up the opposite heights under Fransecki, for a last effort. The darkness is setting in as they swarm forwards; the French desert at last their trenches, and the Germans take the heights. The French left wing now retires towards Metz, and General von Moltke rides off to Rezonville, and reports to the King that victory has also declared for the Germans in the south, at the same time as Canrobert with the 6th corps, and L'Admirault afterwards with 4th, retreat in the north, and thus communication is cut off to the French from the rest of France. German troops are ordered by Prince Frederick Charles to bivouac on their positions, and the cavalry only succeeding in destroying the rail and telegraph by 8 P.M., cannot interfere with retreat.

COMMENTS.

Suggestions of Different Writers.

Bazaine was too anxious to preserve his communications with Metz.

Replies.

He is supposed to have been waiting for the promised aid from the north after retiring on the 16th, and thus place Germans between two fires.—*Vide* his despatches and German fears.

The French Guard and the reserve artillery should on the 18th have reinforced the French right, and this seems to have been practicable. Also that the Marshal was too much on the defensive.

Certainly; but others say that he required them to support French left, when he attacked the Germans at 6 P.M. Yet he never used the Guard, although the fighting in the ravine between the German right and French left was the most desperate during the entire day, and only saved by the 2d German corps arriving.

That Bazaine, on account of the new tactics, accepted a battle in a strong position.

The French deny this; and many writers are of opinion that he merely sustained the attack, and his despatches say that he was coming northwards to McMahon.

Some French say he retired on the 18th to his headquarters thinking all was well, till he heard in the night of the retreat of 4th corps (de l'Admirault's).

This can hardly be correct, because his orders for the change of position for all his corps was sent out from headquarters the night of 18th, not the morning of 19th, and *vide* Changarnier's accusations hereafter.

Should the Germans not have been content with Mars-la-Tour successes, and not made such a sacrifice as on the 18th August?

Refer to the deliberations of the council of war before given, and the necessity for utilising their numerical superiority at once.

Could the fortifying of Bazaine's position been all done on 17th?

The French declare that it was.

It was too difficult to reinforce St Privat.

There are two good wide roads for the purpose, and both these were in the position of the French. Canrobert had been demanding aid for two

long hours, and neither the Imperial Guard nor the reserve artillery lost either a man or horse on 18th. They were held intact.

Was Bazaine in command in person?

Evidence goes to prove that he was not, and only went from Ban St. Martin, his head-quarters, to Plappeville, at 4 P.M. It is also in evidence by his own despatch, that he was writing a letter to McMahon at 2 P.M. *on the* 18*th*, during the fighting all along the line.

Marshal Bazaine's Despatch.

"*To the Emperor.*

"The 18th August, about 10 A.M., I was warned that the enemy was approaching in force, although not engaging. I repeated my orders for standing on the defensive. It was only in the afternoon that I knew we were attacked along the whole line. (This is called to the attention of the reader.) I then went up to the plateau, remaining within reach of the telegraph near Plappeville, by which were sent to me the reports from the observatory established on the summit of the cathedral of Metz, and I was in the best position for overlooking the valley. The enemy having left a *corps-d'armée* (Manteuffel's) on the right bank of the Moselle, I feared a turning movement along the Moselle on our left flank. One

could see masses of the enemy crossing the bridge at Ars-sur-Moselle, and mounting the slopes of the left bank, appearing to direct their march towards Metz. I was forced to take every precaution to parry an attempt to cut us off from our position here, which would have gravely compromised our situation, particularly as our reprovisioning was not yet finished. The forts of Metz, not in a finished state, and hardly armed, could not render any serious service,* and this was also the case with the reserve batteries which were to cover the valley. This operation was demanded in front, and to the right of Plappeville, in order to command the road from St.-Marie-aux-Chênes to Woippy (route de Briey), the opening from the plateau into the valley of Moselle on our right.

"I sent a regiment of horse-artillery of the Guard and two batteries of twelve-pounders of the general reserve to the 6th corps; a brigade of voltigeurs of the Guard (brigade Briancourt) to the support of the division Aymard (4th of the 3d corps). Afterwards the 2d brigade of this division of the Guard occupied in rear the opening approaches of the Col de Lessy. Finally, the division of grenadiers of the Guard, which General Bourbaki had orders to send at 3 P.M., having for instructions to place themselves at the disposition of Marshal Canrobert, not to engage

* Denied by the governor of Metz.

lightly, but keep on the watch.* The reports which I had received during the day had not been disquieting, and it was under their impression that I wrote as follows:—

"'METZ, 18th, 7.50 P.M.

"'I am ignorant of the importance of supplies at Verdun. I think it right to only count upon my real wants there, if I gain the place. I am just come from the plateau, where the fire was very heavy. At this hour, 7 P.M., the fire is ceasing. [This could not have been so, as at the last attack by the 2d corps it was nearly dark, and it is not dark on 18th August at 7 P.M.] Our troops are holding their positions. The 60th regiment has suffered heavily in defending St. Hubert. Later on he says—

"'However, at night, a supreme effort was made by enemy on St. Privat, and a turning movement succeeding on our right rendered the position untenable; and the 6th corps, in spite of its bravery and the devotion of its chief, had to give up the position.'"

The above despatch must have been written immediately on hearing of the enveloping of Canrobert, and proves that he could not have thought all was well at night.

On the following day, the 19th August, he writes—

* Bazaine appears to throw the responsibility on Bourbaki for not reinforcing Canrobert.

"The army fought yesterday all day on the positions from St. Privat to Rozerieulles, *and kept them.* The 4th and 6th corps made, about 9 P.M., a change of front, the right wing in rear, *to parry a further turning movement by the right that the enemy's masses endeavoured to push in the darkness.* This morning I ordered them to descend and take up other positions, and the army is now grouped on the left bank of the Moselle from Longueville to Sansonnet, forming a curved line, and passing in rear of the forts St. Quentin and Plappeville. To-day, the 19th, the whole army will follow the movements of the 6th corps, and will be posted between the town and the forts of St. Quentin and Plappeville, bringing with it as trophies two guns of the Prussians.

"After a succession of such hard battles so quickly, we must not think of taking the offensive immediately. Health of troops is good. Two thousand wounded were sent away on the 18th under the Geneva flag. Moral is good; we have, however, lost since the commencement 35,092 men, 19 generals, and 1877 officers killed, wounded, and missing.

BAZAINE."

The reader must well consider this report, and its falsehoods. The right was to be reinforced, but too late.

It is considered right to give here Canrobert's protest to Bazaine.

"VERNEVILLE, *17th August.*

"A dragoon has given me information that officers commanding corps are to hold themselves in readiness to retake the positions so gloriously held yesterday by the Army of the Rhine. I am ready to execute this order. I demand and entreat your Excellence not to forget that I am out of ammunition for infantry and artillery, and I have no provisions except what I am buying on the spot. I beg you to send quickly as possible all I want. We shall do well; but we shall do better if well provisioned. There is a quantity of wounded and missing in this village. Some are going towards Noveant on the Moselle. There are two prisoners whom I have examined who testify to the immense losses of the Prussians. On the other hand, I have gathered that the enemy is still in position at Vionville, compact and resolute. They say it is the Bavarians occupying this locality.*

"Marshal of France commanding 6th corps.

(Signed) "CANROBERT."

* It may be considered strange that the Prussians, &c., should be put down as Bavarians by Canrobert, notwithstanding their uniforms, and especially helmets, and that he did not know that there were none at Vionville at all, but were with the 3d Army (of Crown Prince).

Bazaine to McMahon.

(While the battle was proceeding.)

"METZ, *18th August*, 2 P.M.

"On account of the successive battles of the 14th and 16th, my march on Verdun has been arrested. I am obliged in the north of Metz to re-victual and get more munitions of war.

"Since this morning the enemy has appeared in great masses, apparently taking the direction of Briey (*the turning movement*), and may be going to attack Canrobert at St. Privat, with his left on Amanvilliers, the *point-d'appui* of No. 4 corps. We are again on the defensive, until I know the real direction of the troops before us, and especially that of the army of reserve, that they say is at Pange, on the right bank of the Moselle, under the orders of the King, who has his head-quarters at the Château d'Aubigny.

"Transmit this despatch to the Emperor and minister of war. I am in fear for the railway of the Ardennes."

(The ignorance of Bazaine as to the real locality of the King and the Germans is here shown).

CHAPTER XI.

Prince Frederick Charles' Despatch—Further remarks—Canrobert's retreat.

(Positions already given.)

"2d ARMY.

"General von Manstein advanced the artillery Von Wrangel (twenty-four pieces) to above the farm of Champenois, and opened fire on the enemy at noon. He sent two battalions of his infantry into the wood of La Cusse, which had not been occupied by the enemy to the extreme skirt of it. The artillery of reserve was to get in position to the left of the artillery of division. Before they could get well into action the enemy replied from several batteries from Martigny and Amanvilliers. Later on his line of artillery extended to St. Privat. Our guns were quite under the fire of his infantry and mitrailleuses. The oblique front of our artillery was rendered necessary by the nature of the ground, and one could only know that the enemy's artillery extended to St. Privat by receiving fire from that direction, not from its being within view. The artillery of the

reserve therefore found itself within good range on its wing, but the rest of its line was too near the enemy, and it experienced great losses; the horse-artillery battery of Captain King (Kœnig) lost one hundred horses, but in spite of this he still continued fighting his guns.

"The Guard took its march to the front by Bois-des-Œillons, Jouaville, and Habonville.

"The head of the 12th corps was visible at Batilly.

"The Prince of Wurtemberg had orders only to engage his artillery until the 12th corps got into action."

"At about 3.30, or a little later, General Pape reported the taking of St.-Marie-aux-Chênes by the Guards and Saxons, and the latter's artillery got into position to the north of it, the other Saxons being on the march to the north to execute the turning movement. At 4 P.M. the Prince of Hohenlohe advanced all his artillery by echelons. The 9th corps had silenced the batteries of the enemy near Martigny and Amanvilliers, but after great losses and fifteen of its guns disabled, and Champenois had been taken by the Hessians. During all the afternoon the enemy sifted well the wood of La Cusse with mitrailleuses and musketry, and our troops there suffered cruel losses.

"The 3d corps arrived at 3 P.M. at Verneville and placed its artillery of reserve under the orders of the commander-in-chief between Verneville and Bois-de-

Genivaux. The critical position of the 9th corps at La Cusse made it requisite to reinforce it with the regiments Elizabeth and Alexander (grenadiers), a battalion of Chasseurs, and a battery.

"Shortly after 5 P.M. the 12th corps had only got to St.-Marie-aux-Jœuf. The lateness of the day did not allow of waiting for the movement commenced from Montois on Roncourt. It seemed therefore necessary to decide something. The Guard advanced from the line Habonville St. Marie on St. Privat on the right, the 4th brigade on the left; and starting a quarter of an hour after them (the 1st division Pape) on each side of the road from St. Marie to St. Privat, they precipitated themselves forwards under rasping fire, but they had to halt, and the assault was interrupted to wait for the Saxons on the enemy's right wing.

"The fusiliers of the Guard were brought up to the left wing. At 6.30 P.M. the Saxons had got near Roncourt. The infantry under General Kraushauer, and batteries under Prince George of Saxony, and the united attack of the Guard and the 12th was made. At a quarter to seven o'clock the first of the attacking battalions reached St. Privat, the Guards from the west, and the Saxons from the north simultaneously, and the village was shortly afterwards evacuated, the enemy retreating on Metz.*

* It is strange that the Red Prince glosses over so lightly the fearful first attack of St. Privat.

"The 10th corps had got some of its artillery at six o'clock into action against St. Privat, and afterwards some of its infantry supported the Guard by means of its division Kratz. After the reinforcements had been sent to General von Manstein, he was able to establish himself solidly to the west of the village of Amanvilliers on the crest; the left wing, under Blumenthal, of his corps could not gain, however, any ground in front of Chautereine, but only hold its own. The artillery of reserve of the 3d corps was alone engaged, augmented up to ten batteries. The losses to the 9th corps becoming more and more considerable in the Bois de la Cusse up to 7 P.M., a brigade of the 3rd corps was sent to its aid, leaving to Von Alvensleben's care to support this with the reserve of his corps, should such become necessary; but there being something like an offensive movement on the part of the enemy, he had to suspend it when it had commenced against Bois-de-Genivaux.

"The 1st Army had been fighting at Gravelotte, and succeeded in driving back the French left wing on arrival of the 2d corps, and to this the success was finally due, and after their march of 37½ kilometres or say about 17 to 18 miles.

"The ground and the darkness prevented any pursuit of the enemy, who in the night retreated on Metz. After 4 P.M. two squadrons of Saxon cavalry had been sent beyond the Orne into the Moselle

valley, and found all the routes barricaded; but it made its reconnaissance, and destroyed the Thionville railway and telegraph at nightfall, and a detachment of more considerable strength having been sent on to Woippy, all the troops received the order to bivouac on the positions they had occupied at the end of the battle. Large guards of infantry were placed in expectation of the enemy in despair attempting to break through in the night, and to keep up communication between corps.

"The 2d Army was opposed to 6th, 4th, and part of 3d French corps. After eight hours' fighting the enemy had been driven from his strong position and cut off from France. He did not fight with the same obstinacy as on 16th. Besides, he seemed also to fail in ammunition for artillery. Our losses, No. 2 Army, are heavy, 14,000 men and 520 officers.

General Remarks.

The battle of St. Privat or Gravelotte had been for the Germans the most sanguinary of the war up to its date. The losses surpassed all expectation. It had been a sacrifice of human life in order to utilise the troops at German command before any help could arrive to Bazaine, and this seems the only excuse for it. The extreme losses of the Germans at Mars-la-Tour, where they fought at

such fearful odds, have been already given, and the French loss was about equal to theirs, but distributed over their five *corps-d'armée.* Here at Gravelotte the German losses of the 2d Army, comprising the 3d, 9th, 10th, 12th and Guard, were 13,620 officers and soldiers *hors-de-combat.* Adding to the above the losses of the 1st Army, comprised in the 7th and 8th corps, and the 2d, which last only fought from one to two hours, at 7000 men, we arrive at the extraordinary number of killed and wounded of over 21,000 in the space of eight hours, and with scarcely any war trophies on either side. The French army, entrenched as it was, and by reason of its standing fortified positions, suffered much less than on the 16th at Rezonville, viz., 11,678 soldiers and 595 officers were *hors-de-combat.* About 2000 men were missing during the retreat, and who ultimately rejoined the Eagles, consequently the French loss seems to have been at about 12,300 total. (Bazaine's despatches gives 12,273.)

The forces engaged on both sides may be thus explained in detail.

Against the French left, consisting of part of 3d and all 2d corps, numbering something like 60,000 men, were opposed the 7th and 8th, and at the end the 2d German corps, or part of this last corps, say above 70,000, without counting any cavalry.

The French right and centre, comprising the 4th

and 6th corps, and some of 3d, about 65,000, opposed to the 9th, Guards, 12th, 10th, and 3d, total about 145,000; centre being opposite Verneville. It is further to be remarked that the Germans had to engage all their reserves; the French lacked all these, and its commander-in-chief seems to have left in total inaction, not only the whole Imperial Guard, upwards of 22,000 men with 7000 horses, 60 guns, and 12 mitrailleuses, but the cavalry and artillery of the reserve, who were anxious to be sent forward, neither of whom lost during the entire day a single man or horse, as before stated.

It has been frequently said that St. Privat was too isolated, and not easy to reinforce from the rear; still, although there is a deep valley there, and woods, there are two good roads for all arms and in French possession on the 18th: one from Amanvilliers, the other along the valley in rear. There was also a great French battery of 60 guns in the quarries of Amanvilliers, which assisted in covering the retreat of Canrobert and the 6th corps.

From where the Guard was to St. Privat being only five miles, the question resolves itself into—"Ought, then, the French, in spite of inferiority of numbers, with their strong position, to have been beaten on the 18th?"

Many military writers and others seem of opinion that results might have been in favour of the French

(who, be it remembered, held all their real positions till after 6 P.M.) if part of the Imperial Guard and reserve artillery had been sent to the support of the 6th corps, which ultimately ran short of ammunition, and was without artillery or engineer park, both of which had been left at Chalons.

The powerful reserves above mentioned could have safely advanced by the road in rear of Amanvilliers, and by that of the wood of Jammont in rear of St. Privat, and come forward as soon as the Saxons reached Roncourt. These last would then have found themselves opposed to the Imperial Guard.* All this would have occurred just at the time that the offensive had been taken by Bazaine against the German right, and the repulse and confusion which took place in the 7th and 8th corps in the ravine, below Gravelotte, while Canrobert would have got fresh ammunition. On the other hand, it is sometimes supposed that Bazaine required his resources on his left in case he had been attacked by three in place of two German corps *earlier*, or any other eventuality. These are points for the consideration of military readers.

Marshal Canrobert (whatever Germans may write)

* At 6 P.M. the Germans had been shattered at St. Privat, their left repulsed; their centre before Verneville could hardly hold out; the German right also had been repulsed to Gravelotte and beyond that village, and its 2d corps had not yet arrived. Such was their critical position. The French Imperial Guard and reserve artillery were doing nothing!

made an orderly retreat, which he conducted in person. He was covered by the heavy battery of sixty guns of position placed in the quarries of Amanvilliers firing over Marengo, and supported by the 94th regiment, which had held St.-Marie-aux-Chênes, by the 100th of the line, and by the division of cavalry of Barrail, composed of the splendid Chasseurs d'Afrique and a brigade of dragoons belonging to L'Admirault's corps. Of course this movement of retreat of the 6th corps at once uncovered the right of No. 4 (L'Admirault's), which was in consequence overwhelmed by the artillery of the 3d, 12th, and Guard of the Germans, which took it in front and flank. The Imperial Guard, when too late, tried to gain the Amanvilliers plateau, but it was met by the retreating masses of the 6th and some of the 4th corps. It arrived just when the reserve artillery of the 4th corps had come to an end also of its ammunition, and obliged to retire to the Plappeville plateau. One of its battalions held the farm of Montigny-la-Grange during the night, and the grenadier division deployed right and left of the artillery, protecting at the same time the retreat of both Marshal Canrobert and General L'Admirault.

The French, it seems, did not evacuate till early morning Montigny, Folie, Leipzig, and Moscou (ominous names!). The advance of the cavalry into the Moselle valley had only succeeded in its object

by nightfall, otherwise it might have seriously interfered with the retreat, which might have been then disastrous. The conduct of both Canrobert (to whom belonged of right the command-in-chief) and de l'Admirault, seems to have been throughout the day worthy of great praise; and certainly no one deserves more than the former to have been made the chief figure in the bas-relief of the monument to the French fallen at Mars-la-Tour, and this last great battle of St. Privat or Gravelotte.

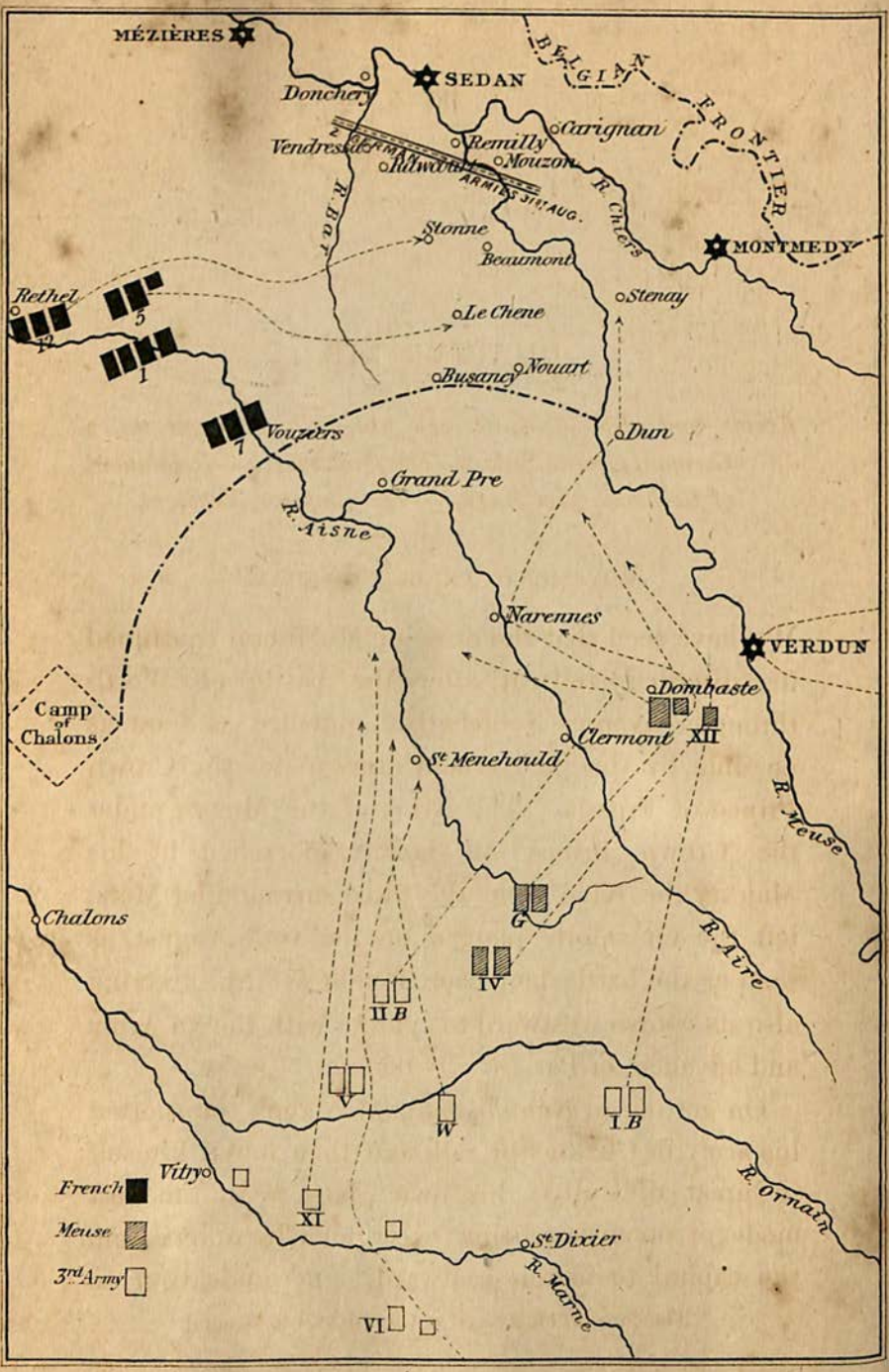
"PIÉ JÉSU DOMINE DONA EIS REQUIEM SEMPITERNAM. AMEN!"

EVENTS PRIOR TO,

AND

BATTLE OF SEDAN, Etc.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1870.



3rd & 4th German Armies turning North to attack M'Mahon, August 26th.—Page 166.

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CHAPTER XII.

Events and dispositions of each army, French, and the 2 German, prior to Sedan—The flank march—Resolutions of Germans, 31st August—The Emperor Napoleon.

MOVEMENTS PRIOR TO SEDAN.

WE have seen that the army of McMahon continued its disorderly retreat after the battle of Worth through Saverne, Neufchateau, pursued as soon as possible by the 3d German army under the Crown Prince of Prussia. The Army of the Meuse, under the Crown Prince of Saxony, detached by his Majesty the King from the force surrounding Metz, left the Gravelotte plateau on the 19th August, as soon as the battle had been fought (18th), directing also its course westward to operate with the 3d Army and advance on Paris.

On getting to Neufchateau, McMahon transported his army to Chalons by rail, and then found himself in great difficulty; his own plans as to the best mode of operation being overridden by orders from the capital to march eastward,* and endeavour to

* The curse in most cases, not leaving all to General.

relieve, and form junction with Bazaine. After maturely considering everything, viz., the necessity for covering the capital, the danger of advancing into the Meuse valley, only to be accomplished by a perilous flank march between the Germans and the Belgian frontier, which would also be futile should Bazaine effect his retreat from Metz southward, made him at last determined to fall back on Rheims and await the movements of the Germans.*

On the 21st McMahon retreated northwards, and it is evident he must have been in great difficulty, as he was obliged to burn a great portion of his supplies.

On the 23d, McMahon, according to orders from Paris, took his course north-eastwards by Dun and Stenay, and on the 25th had actually made no further progress in his task than gaining the line Vonzier Rethel, where he had again to re-ration; such was the state of the boasted Intendance.

Now the only chance of success lay in McMahon's rapidity of movement. Although this march was a bold and perilous one, still one much more so was made by the great Napoleon's orders in the campaign of 1809 in the north, right across the Archduke

* McMahon marched east by north on the 23d. The Germans on learning it changed front on 26th, left wing in advance. If the former marched twelve miles a day, it would take eight days to Briey; the latter only having fifty-five miles from Bar-le-duc in place of one hundred and sixty miles to march from Chalons, would probably come up with him, and he would be obliged to fight both armies. The having to reprovision at Rethel it would seem was fatal to him.

Charles's front. At that time the Emperor arrived from Paris, and at once seeing the critical state of affairs, directed Davoust to march from Ratisbon (Regensburg) to Abendsberg and join Napoleon's centre, and to Massena to push on his force to Pfaffenburg and the Isar, and threaten the Austrian communications. This most perilous of flank marches was carried out brilliantly and successfully, because with lightning-like rapidity, and with that of Massena changed the whole state of affairs in a short time in favour of the great captain; but the forces of the afterwards Prince of Eckmühl were not in the confusion that were those of poor Marshal McMahon. By the 25th the German armies had reached the line Vitry-Dombasle, with some of their cavalry on the left at the entrance of the Marne valley, and more of this army pushed through the Argonnes.

From the German scouts' splendid intelligence, they had turned northwards themselves on the 26th, and the Army of the Meuse had immediately seized the bridges at Dun and Stenay. McMahon on this date wheeled to the right on the pivot of Vouziers, to gain the Beaumont and Buzancy roads; but seeing his march now imperilled, as the Germans had now occupied Stenay in force, he, in spite of renewed orders from Paris to make Montmedy his objective, turned northwards. To show the state of

French intelligence, Count Palakao now telegraphed: "You have not the Prince of Prussia in your front, only one of his lieutenants, and have three days' start. If you abandon Bazaine a revolution will break out in Paris." Consequently the march on Montmedy was again attempted with increased perils.

McMahon's orders for his desperate flank movement was as follows:—

The 12th corps had passed the Meuse the night before, and was the only one on the right bank at Mouzon. The 1st was to march from Roucourt to pass the river at Remilly in order to occupy Carignan with its head-quarters. The 5th, which was at Beaumont, was to move to Mouzon. The 7th at Oches was to march by Stonne on Villiers, where a bridge of boats had been thrown over; but the 5th corps was unfortunately surprised at Beaumont and thrown back in disorder on Mouzon, so could only be feebly supported by the 12th, which had gained the right bank. With regard to the 7th corps, which was not far off, it could, instead of passing the Meuse at Villiers, have marched "au canon" and fallen on the enemy's left at Beaumont; but it got blocked up in the defile of Stonne and Roucourt, with all its impedimenta, and thrown into great disorder by the enemy's shell. It could not effect any assisting movement, but had to retreat on Remilly, a portion of it making its way to Sedan. Thus McMahon's *corps-d'armée*

were either attacked separately, without being able to support each other, or thrown into disorder without having fought at all. The above was the unfortunate result of the flank march with troops with little manœuvring qualities, and made McMahon order a general retreat on Sedan.

The armies of the two Crown Princes, by the nights of the 30th and 31st, extended in a line between Vendresse and Mouzon, that is, about twelve English miles south of Sedan, and covering with their front northwards a space of eighteen English miles to the east and west of the Meuse, with six army corps massed between Roncourt and Mouzon, and available for an immediate attack northwards on the morrow.

TELEGRAM.

"*King to Queen.*

"*30th August.*

"We have had a glorious victory by 4th and 12th corps and 1st Bavarians. McMahon beaten and driven back through Beaumont, over Meuse, to Mouzon. One thousand prisoners, twelve mitrailleuses, and much stores taken. Moderate losses. I return to field to follow up fruits of victory. May God be merciful to us in future as He has been up to now. WILHELM."

Digressing for a moment, and considering what was going on now between the two old enemies, France and Prussia, in 1815 and 1870, it may be noted that a view over the field where the great battle was about to be fought, showed a vast extent as compared to that of Waterloo. That of Sedan extended over a circumference of sixteen miles, taking in twelve villages, completely hidden from each other by the undulating ground and hills. At Waterloo the whole field, except that part around the village of Planchenoit, may be taken in at a glance. The French position on the ridge of La Belle Alliance was about 1200 yards distant from the English on the ridge of Mount St. Jean, and the extreme length of both positions from east to west was about 2500 yards. The intervening valley, with one little spur, had become a quagmire (unfortunately for Napoleon) by the tremendous rainfall of the 17th June, impassable for cavalry and artillery in the early part of the day of the battle, which obliged the great Emperor to wait till after 11 A.M. Here the gradual closing in of the two armies, which showed a front of eighteen miles (from Vendresse to Mouzon), in one vast enveloping movement, taking village after village and height after height, with their artillery ultimately in position on these latter, caught the French in the small weak fortress of Sedan, like rats in a trap, and (as history is said to repeat itself) the third Napoleon

wishing also, like his great ancestor, to lay down his life with his army.

Movements and Resolutions of August 31.

The march of the two armies of the Crown Princes of Prussia and of Saxony had been continued in a northern direction since August 26.

The Meuse now separated the bulk of the two armies. The troops under the Crown Prince of Saxony moved more and more to the eastern bank; those under the Crown Prince of Prussia remained, up to the 31st, upon the western bank of the river. The movements of the two armies, which were ordered for August 31, were continued in a northern direction in the following manner:—

The Crown Prince of Saxony was ordered to extend three army corps (the 12th, or Royal Saxon corps, the Prussian corps of Guards, and the 4th Prussian corps) along the eastern bank of the Meuse, to block all the roads across the territory between the river and the Belgian frontier, a narrow strip of land of an average width of seven English miles, and to prevent the enemy from advancing in an eastern direction towards Metz.

The Crown Prince of Prussia, on the other hand, was to advance along the western bank of the Meuse, but this movement was to be carried out in a different

way by the two wings of his army. The chief object of his right wing, consisting of the Bavarian corps, was to drive those troops of the enemy which might still be stationed west of the Meuse across the river to the other bank. But his left wing, consisting of the 5th and the 11th Prussian corps, and of one division of the Wurtembergers, was to push on rapidly directly northwards. Here was an early encounter with the enemy not to be expected on account of the sharp bend of the river. The chief object of the two corps was to gain an advanced position, as far as possible, northwards, so that it might be possible to come up with the enemy. That above-mentioned bend of the river was to be turned, and the march up to the most northern point of this bend was to be completed during the two days of August 31 and September 1. If this movement was carried out successfully the enemy would be surrounded on the right bank of the river from the north, west, and south-east.

When these movements of the two armies were commenced during August 31, the advanced troops of the Crown Prince of Saxony came almost everywhere in contact with the enemy, whilst of those of the army of the Crown Prince of Prussia only the troops of his right wing. The French regiments were driven back. In front of the Bavarians the enemy crossed the Meuse in a north-eastern direc-

tion, whilst he retired in front of the Saxons and the Prussian Guards in a north-western direction. All the enemy's troops moved towards Sedan or into the neighbourhood of this fortress.

By and by the French fell back in greater haste, especially when the Bavarian artillery began to open fire upon them in their rear near Remilly. Also near Carignan the French and the Prussian Guards exchanged shots; and soon greater bodies of the enemy, leaving their whole baggage behind, were flying in disorder. It was evident that they were not going to engage in any serious combat on that day.

This state of affairs was reported to the King and General Moltke at their head-quarters near Vendresse towards evening. In a council of war, in which the Crown Prince of Prussia and General von Blumenthal took part, the different and probable measures which might be resorted to by the enemy were taken into consideration. It was thought possible (1.) That the retreat of the enemy might degenerate into a route, and, in consequence of it, the French army might be dispersed over too extended a district, whereby it would be impossible to engage the enemy in one great decisive battle during one of the following days. (2.) That the French commander-in-chief might take advantage of the hasty retreat of his troops, and move in a western

direction towards Mézières, in which case it would take several days before the enemy could be surrounded. (3.) The neighbourhood of the Belgian frontier suggested moreover the thought that a portion of the French army might cross this, and thus prevent a surrender to the superior forces of the Germans.

In consequence of these considerations it was resolved to take advantage of the favourable positions which had been gained by means of forced marches, and of the previous victorious combats, and to make renewed efforts in order to obtain the object desired. The first of September was, therefore, not to be a day of rest, as intended on account of the great exhaustion of the troops of the right wing, but a day of decisive battle.

The Crown Prince of Prussia, who had advanced on the 30th of August with his two Prussian corps to where the Meuse near Donchery has doubled back southwards from its northern sharp bend, was ordered to cross the river the very same night; to advance further along this, and not to halt before he had arrived in the neighbourhood of Briancourt. It was hoped that thus, whatever plan the enemy might have, the Crown Prince would be able to engage him early in the morning in a decisive battle.

Similar orders were sent to the Crown Prince of Saxony, who had his head-quarters a long way to the

cast. His troops, which had already come up with the enemy in several places, were to advance to the attack early on the following morning.

The fate of the day was almost decided beforehand by means of this closely surrounding movement, and we are approaching the last act of a tragedy. What will happen can be almost seen beforehand. Intense interest lay in the manner in which it was to be carried out.

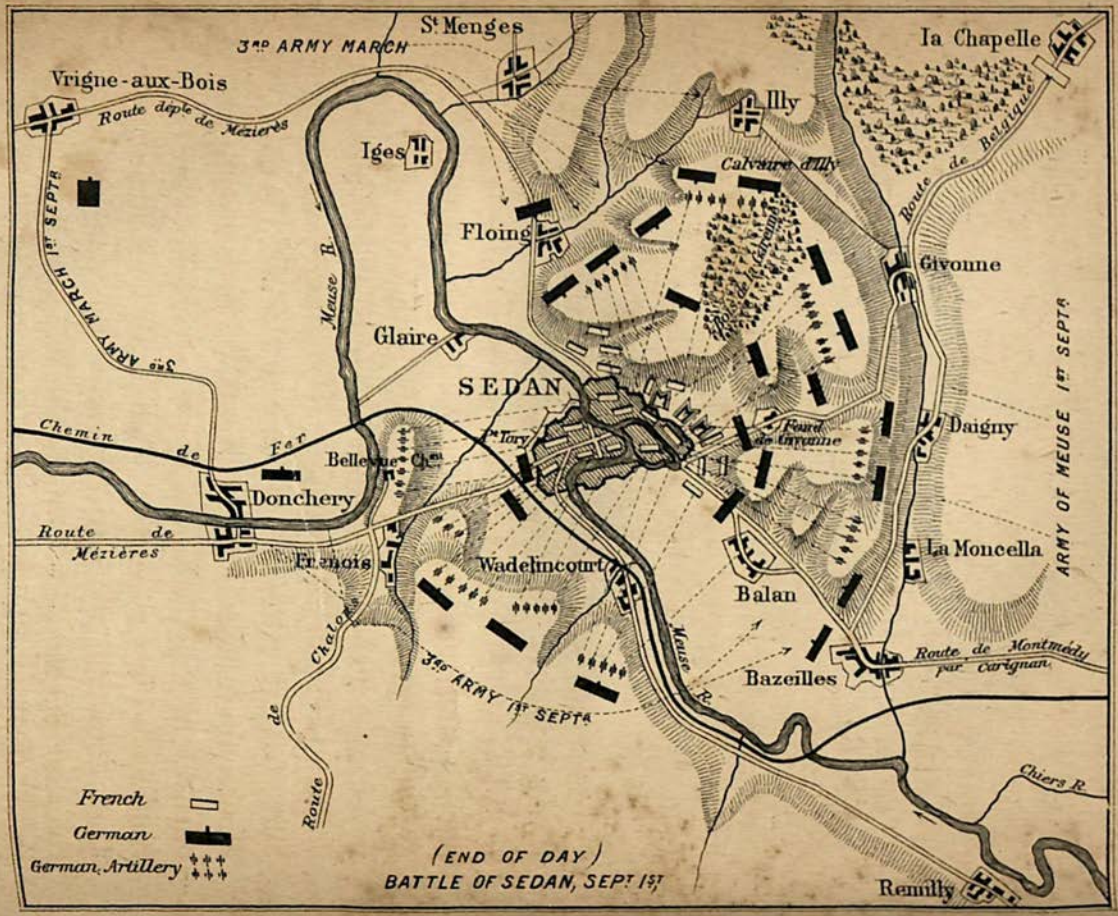
The Emperor Napoleon on the 31st of August.

The French were prepared for an attack, and were resolved to accept battle with all their forces.

In what way did this crisis affect the Emperor? For over a fortnight he had fled from every battle, was dictated to by his Minister of War, threatened with a revolution in his capital, Trochu at the head of the government; full of anxiety, yielding even to those whom he knew to be incapable of gaining any success; all hopes to which he had clung, all confidence with which his friends had been anxious to inspire him, dissipated in one short moment. Could he be hopeful of a successful issue after such experience? The necessity of accepting battle here was in itself a great misfortune for the French. Their intention had been to join Bazaine, and when the two armies had united, to fight the enemy; now they

were compelled to fight separately. The Emperor now issued a proclamation :—

"Soldiers," he said in this, "As the beginning of the campaign was unfortunate, I have, disregarding my own personal interest, given up the command of the army to those of my marshals which public opinion has designated (not to those marshals whom I myself have appointed, according to the best of my knowledge)." And later on he says : "Under these difficult circumstances the Empress represents me worthily in Paris." . . . "I have preferred the position of a soldier to that of a sovereign. No sacrifice I shall deem too great in order to maintain the safety of my country. NAPOLEON."



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CHAPTER XIII.

Battle of Sedan—French and German positions—Particulars of battle—Burning of Bazeilles—Marguerites' Cavalry—Different plans of von Wimpffen and Ducrot—Refusal to hoist white flag—Bombardment.

Battle at Sedan.

Commencing with a few words topographically, Sedan is one of the fortresses which form a girdle of safety for France towards the north. But it is an old one, which does not at all come up to the demands of modern times. It lies in a hollow of the Ardennes, in a district abounding in woods, heights, and ravines on both banks of the Meuse. Its walls are neither high nor extensive, and its moats, flooded by the Meuse, are insignificant. Towards the east, directly opposite its walls, are some ranges of heights which run out to high table-lands and nearly surround it. They command the fortress, and nothing is easier than to destroy the town by bombarding it from these, from which one can look right into the latter through the intervals between the houses with their pointed gables.

The position which McMahon had given to his troops on August 31 was entirely on the right bank of the Meuse. Here his troops were in positions surrounding Sedan from the south, east, and north, which were strengthened by a great number of well-arranged batteries, by the shelter of many woods and gardens, the enclosure-walls and houses of the villages in which the troops were stationed, and by the bends of the ravines and slopes of the country, which could be used for masking generally.

The French Position.

Towards the south the French held the heights in front of the villages of Bazeilles and Balan; towards the east the whole low grounds which stretch down from the northern range of heights, and in which the villages of La Moncelle, Daigny, and Givonne are situated; towards the north the French position extended as far as St. Menges, a projecting spur of mountains, which rises between Illy and Floing in a north-westerly direction, and dominates the different ravines and the broad and extensive meadow-lands of the right bank of the Meuse, was here most strongly fortified.

It was a semicircular position which the French had taken up. Its centre was in Sedan; its two extreme radii corresponded to the direction of the Meuse from south-east towards north-west, and its

circumference was formed by the before-mentioned villages of St. Menges, Illy, Givonne, Daigny, La Moncelle, and Bazeilles.

German Position.

Let us now present to ourselves the positions of the German troops.

South-west of Sedan, about two English miles from it, lies the village of Frenois. It is situated near the angle which is formed by the Meuse when it has doubled back southwards from its northern bend, and turns again towards its general north-western direction.

On two sides of Frenois, towards the west and the south, some heights rise gradually sloping to the east, affording a wide outlook over the country in front. Upon the slope of the height to the west of Frenois, and to the south of the little town of Donchery, the Crown Prince of Prussia had his head-quarters, on that to the south of Frenois the King of Prussia, on the morning of the 1st of September. The two commanders were separated from each other by 1½ English miles, the King nearer to the centre, the Crown Prince nearer to the left wing of the German army.

Looking towards Sedan, a great depression of the ground in front of these two heights opens, offering great variations in its formation, encircled by the elevations and woods of the Ardennes. Here to the

left the frequent bends of the Meuse flow between meadows and gentle elevations; there to the right, and directly in front, larger valleys and hills here and there covered with woods and trees, but for the most part elevated open plains, pursuing different directions. Everywhere roofs and church towers are seen, which rise out of the woods; houses and enclosure-walls, half hidden, vary the scenery in a pleasant manner, in the midst of which lies the fortress of Sedan with its brick walls and its straight moat banks, which join each other by close or open angles.

Below the head-quarters of the two Prussian commanders stand arrayed in a long line the heavy batteries of the Bavarians facing east. Close to them, to south-east, a strong Bavarian body of infantry is halting, ready for the moment when it is to begin to play its part. Further towards south-east the remaining part of the infantry of the two Bavarian corps is moving; they are crossing the Meuse above Bazeilles upon pontoons quickly floated: so different to poor McMahon's, there being no pontoon trains to the army of Chalons, and none to Canrobert's 6th corps at Metz. Further still towards the east, the three corps under the Crown Prince of Saxony are advancing on a broad front eager for the attack. On the opposite side, towards the north of the whole visible country, two Prussian corps are advancing from their separate encampments, the 11th corps in front, the 5th corps

in rear. At a little distance behind them, one division of Würtemburgers is halting, directing their attention towards the west and east; towards the west, as it is possible that some succour for the French may approach from Mézières; towards the east, that they may not lose touch with the two Prussian corps. Everywhere the different corps are advancing with all their artillery and cavalry, Stolberg's cavalry being on the plain of Donchery, and there is a stir all round.

When the morning of this day began to break, a thick fog was covering the country and the movements of the troops were shrouded. Only by the sound of the horses' hoofs and by the rattling of the gun-carriages one knew what preparations were being made. Gradually when the sun had risen somewhat above the horizon, the fog upon the heights and round the tops of the high trees was perforated like a spider's web, although lower down it was whirling in thick and impenetrable clouds. The bivouac-fires close to the sides of the roads appeared to those who passed close by, like waning torches in the darkness. A dull lustreless light spread over everything. The air was very close; at last, about mid-day, the sun broke through the fog with his bright rays.

Although during the morning the prospect was very confined, yet the thunder of the artillery was heard in the direction from Bazeilles at 6 A.M., for

the range of the Bavarian batteries had been tested during the previous evening and found satisfactory. Under the cover of this cannonade the 1st Bavarian corps, under Von der Tann, crossed the Meuse and turned towards Bazeilles. Here the enemy was posted on heights under excellent cover. There could be no doubt that he would make a stubborn resistance. The batteries on both sides began to measure their strength. Then the columns of infantry advanced skirmishing. Both sides fought with the greatest stubbornness, and yet for several hours without any decisive result, fortune of war alternately fluctuating from one to the other.

Not long after the commencement of this fighting, the din of battle began also to be heard a little further towards north-east. The 12th corps, belonging to the Army of the Meuse, which marched in front of the other corps, came up first with those columns of the enemy which guarded the heights round the village of La Moncelle, and later on with those troops which protected the heights from there up to the village of Daigny. Though at first only the regiments of one division—the 24th—had arrived, yet the fight extended soon along a line of more than one English mile, and its character was like that at Bazeilles (the birthplace of Turenne). The French were fighting here, as there, under the same favourable conditions; they occupied favourably selected

positions, were prepared for the attack, and had at first here the advantage of superior numbers in men and guns. If the Bavarians here and the Saxons there had not been sure of being soon reinforced, they could not have stood their ground so long, as, for instance, in one part of the battlefield a Saxon battery was, for an hour, opposed to five French ones.

Encouraged by their superiority in numbers, the French began to act upon the offensive on a large scale against the Bavarians, as well as against the Saxons. More batteries of guns and mitrailleuses were brought to the front and got in position. The light of the growing day rendered a more correct aim possible. Soon after, howling with rage, here regiments of Zouaves and Turcos, there regiments of the line, came rushing forward with the intention of crushing the Germans. But in vain. The columns of the latter remained firm. Their fire, reserved till the right moment, drove back the aggressors with great loss; and more than that: these unsuccessful attacks did still greater harm to the French, for the Bavarians and Saxons following in their steps gained ground, the Bavarian regiments advancing at once as far as the nearest farmhouses of Bazeilles. Their left wing extended to the Meuse, their right wing to the country round La Moncelle. The Saxon regiments gained ground about the same time, threaten-

ing the entrenched positions of the French in the villages of La Moncelle and Daigny.

The Saxons and Bavarians were now keeping touch within a much narrower circle, closely surrounding a third part of the enemy's position.

It was 10 A.M. The character of the combat began to change. The Bavarians as well as the Saxons had been reinforced, the former by one division of the 2d Bavarian corps, the latter first by the other Saxon division (the 23d), later by the Prussian Guards corps, and some detachments of the 4th corps. These troops had arrived from the west and east; the Prussian Guards corps from a distance of twelve English miles.

The combat began now to take greater dimensions; the masses of the attacking forces became closer; the number of batteries in position increased.

At length on the left wing some detachments of the Bavarians forced their way as far as the nearest farm-house. Those French columns and batteries which had been drawn up in front of the village had already been obliged some time ago to withdraw. But house after house, stable after stable, were now defended like fortresses. Everywhere there were little garrisons, consisting of as many combatants as could be placed at the windows and doors. Earth enclosures were loopholed. The Bavarians were obliged to besiege, and take by assault each enclosed

space. However much the superiority of the Germans in numbers must have become evident, there was with the French no thought of demanding quarter, or of surrendering. In every house the inhabitants—men, women, male-servants, sturdy maid-servants and lads—joined the soldiers in fighting. There were only few who took to flight in the cellars, partly from fear or weakness, partly from prudent consideration, and without being carried away by the general fury. To the valour which the laws of all nations prescribe as an attribute of the soldier, to the passions which are excited by the personal danger of every one, a rage and a wild fury was added, which caused terrible things to be done: men, armed with the weapons of the dead and wounded, placed themselves in ambush; women, standing at their doors, armed with axes; even the priests had become the leaders of armed lads and maid-servants. Sad to relate, enormities which are generally only committed by a few criminals of the blackest dye, became here the common acts of most inhabitants of a great and rich village. Everything with a human face carried arms and made use of them.

Many Bavarians fell there and then. It lasted a long time, till the captured houses, after having been thoroughly searched, had been rendered free of danger.

At last Bavarian riflemen and bodies of infantry

had advanced victoriously for a considerable distance through the village. But at the corner of two streets a great house built of stone opposed its front and gable, both abounding in windows and loophole doors, to the advancing enemy. Many Bavarians were killed here, within a few moments, each of them riddled by bullets fired from close quarters.

The order to fire the house was given. Some pioneers went to the back of the house and made holes in the walls, and fire-brands were thrown in. The flames burst out, and soon ended the vigorous defence of the house, and the Bavarians prevailed. Whoever attempted to get out was made prisoner or shot. The fire spread and consumed all in the house—soldiers, village people of both sexes, male and female servants, and children. No one was left.

For several hours, up to nearly two o'clock, the fearful fight was continued in the streets and in the houses of Bazeilles. Many other fires were lit up in a similar way, in order to end the furious attacks made from the walls of the houses. In the meantime other columns of the two Bavarian corps had advanced to the right and left of the village, and had driven back those French troops which were stationed in its rear towards Balan, and later through this place towards Sedan.

The Saxons, too, on the right of the Bavarians, and

the Prussian Guards on the right of the latter, had in the meantime extended their line of attack. Soon after ten o'clock the front of these two corps extended beyond La Moncelle and Daigny and approached the village of Givonne. Simultaneously some Saxon regiments began their attack on La Moncelle, and more northwards Saxon regiments and those of the Prussian Guards the village of Daigny. They met in both places with heroic and obstinate resistance. But at last the Germans carried the positions of the French. At the same time the 1st division of the Prussian Guards had advanced along a ravine northwards from Daigny towards the village of Givonne, situated at one English mile from the former place. Fire from the French batteries and the infantry were poured upon them; but unchecked, the Germans advanced, and drove the enemy out of his positions, capturing a battery of seven guns and three mitrailleuses. To the west of the before-mentioned villages the ground rises towards Sedan. The German troops, although fatigued by the previous fighting, moved at once towards these heights against the centre of the French position. Regiments of the 4th corps filled up those gaps which had been caused by the greater extension of the German lines. The heights were at length taken by assault, and batteries planted upon them. The whole valley of Givonne was now in German possession.

Prince Hohenlohe, the commander of the artillery of the Guard, rode hurriedly from battery to battery directing their fire. Everything within range was cannonaded. Here some strong columns of French infantry, which were in danger of being crushed, made some desperate attempts to break through the enemy's lines. They rushed headlong forward, but were driven back in confusion by the fire of the distant German artillery. There swarms of French skirmishers tried to advance against the Saxon and Prussian infantry, but the shells of the artillery of the Guard dispersed them as soon as they advanced. In another part of the field some French batteries, deprived of their gunners, were, in the confusion and flight of the French infantry, captured by sharpshooters of the 4th corps. The battlefield was now in the power of the German troops, although they had not yet occupied it. It was between two and three o'clock—at the same time when the battle in Bazeilles had come to an end, and when the Bavarians had advanced to Balan—when here too victory had declared in favour of the Germans, that the guns were moved forward down the gentle slope to where the valleys open, and were brought nearer to each other.

But suddenly French fugitives from the northern battlefield come in sight, first in small numbers, then in greater masses. They cannot be stopped! Their

number increases more and more, and they run direct towards the lines of the Saxon and Prussian troops. Some of these fugitives turn in their anxiety now to the right, now to the left, and try to hide in the woods or in the ravines. Many of them succeed in getting out of range of the guns; but they are encountered by German infantry, and are killed or surrender.

Let us turn to the other German army, which had attacked the French position from the early morning.

The 11th and the 5th Prussian corps had, as before mentioned, advanced during the night as far as to the neighbourhood of Briancourt. At 7 A.M. they began to move eastwards. The 11th corps kept nearer to the Meuse, and advanced to the north of the bend of the river, upon the open road, and across the plain at the side of it in a straight direction upon St. Menges. The regiments of the 5th corps wheeled to the left into the valley of the Meuse and on to rising ground in order to attack the enemy in his rear.

It was about 9 A.M. when the 11th corps came up with the enemy's advanced guard near St. Menges. The French had here taken position on the opposite side of a brook; at once a brisk cannonade began; the artillery of the Prussian corps proved to be the stronger, especially from the moment that the 5th corps from its position on the heights began to take

part in the fight. When thereupon some columns of Prussian infantry advanced at the double, the enemy retired to a position behind St. Menges.

In rear of St. Menges two villages, Floing and Illy, are situated, the former more southwards, the other more eastwards. The French had taken up an extensive position, and had strongly entrenched themselves, and this position was very well chosen. Its capture could not have been effected in such a comparatively short time if the superiority of the Germans in numbers had not enabled them to surround and attack it from all sides.

But scarcely had the French withdrawn from this position when the boom of cannon was heard from three sides at the same time. From the north and north-east the batteries of the 11th and 5th corps on the heights, and from the other side of the Meuse the Bavarian batteries, which stood between Frenois and Sedan, in the immediate neighbourhood of the head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Prussia, took part in the cannonade, and an artillery fight now began. But soon it became evident how unequal its effect was; for, whilst all the powerful efforts of the Germans was concentrated from a wide circle on the heights towards one position, the fire of the French was towards the circumference of a wide circle.

It was one o'clock when, after the retreat of the French batteries, the signal was given by the com-

manders of the German infantry and cavalry to advance on Floing. They pressed forward across ditches and ravines, and through woods. The French commander collected in greatest haste as many troops as possible for resistance, and increased his fire, which was brought to bear on the Prussian troops. Lieutenant-General von Gersdorff, the commander of the 11th corps, had scarcely availed himself of a favourable moment for the attack, when he was dangerously wounded. The more the fight assumed an unfavourable aspect for the French, the more furious and desperate became their resistance, whilst the Prussian attack was continued with self-possession and firmness. The King, who from his position could follow the different incidents of the fighting, was filled with admiration for the bravery and heroism of his troops. Almost without firing a shot the Prussian battalions advanced and drove the enemy back with the bayonet. But whilst the Prussians were still pressing forward victoriously, some French regiments of cavalry (Marguerites), one after the other, dashed out of covered positions, but the fire forced back these with great loss, and four different attacks of the French cavalry were without success—who in fact sacrificed themselves. In the meantime the village of Floing had been taken by storm. The Prussians advanced across the bridge, through the streets, to the south side of the village.

They had at last approached Sedan, now four English miles from it. In the wood of Garenne the French infantry kept up the fight with Prussian infantry, and this was the last struggle of the former. They were dispersed in all directions, not knowing where they might find shelter or safety, death or captivity. Great numbers of them ran direct towards the front of those troops of the Prussian Guard which from the south had advanced towards this part of the battlefield. The ring was closed; the victory of the Germans was general. The French had now only to choose between surrender or annihilation.

The fighting came to an end. The batteries ceased firing. The infantry formed two lines, one in rear of the other, cavalry in rear again—three living walls, all the troops thus massed. The Bavarians joined the Saxons, the Saxons the Prussians, the Prussians again the Bavarians—thus the ring was formed.

On the flank towards the north-west the Wurtembergers held positions. They had taken part in the glory of the day by repelling a body of French troops which had approached from Mézières.

The enveloping movement of the Germans had been accomplished with such rapidity and determination that whole bodies of French troops were surrounded without in the least being aware of it, and were compelled to lay down their arms. Thousands

were taken prisoners, whole battalions and squadrons with all their officers. The more the battlefield was cleared in consequence of the forming up of the regiments and batteries, and by placing the prisoners together, more men were found who had hidden themselves, or who had lost their way. There were no end of prisoners being brought in. In order to accelerate this work the commander of the 1st division of the Guard made a French trumpeter blow the French assembly, whereupon they came running from all directions like bees returning to their hives.

During the interval of peace the wounded were carefully attended to by the Germans and the Crown Prince's surgeons. As the battlefield was in the power of the Germans, they were not interfered with in their endeavours to save those who were not beyond all help. In the rear of the lines sanitary detachments had been arranged, especially in the northern and southern part of the battlefield.

Oh, if one had nothing worse to report! But this day, which had called forth so many terrors unavoidable in war, added other and still greater horrors. In Bazeilles, where the Bavarians had been fighting with soldiers and country people for many hours, it came not to an end, in spite of the end of the general fighting. The French soldiers had evacuated the village. But inside the houses, of which only some had been burnt down, men and women, lads and maid-ser-

vants were lying in ambush, ready to continue the combat. A few hours previously they had, from fear of the Bavarians, retired into the cellars and closets. But when the victorious enemy had left the village and advanced beyond it and even beyond Balan, they commenced attacking isolated stragglers of the enemy. What seldom has occurred in the history of wars was about to happen. A fighting body of nearly 150,000 soldiers had melted away, owing to repeated defeats, to 83,000 men. This number of men was now filling the narrow streets of a small fortress, surrounded by an enemy nearly three times more numerous. It could safely be predicted that only two things were possible; either the preservation of the army by means of surrender, or annihilation if the combat should be continued. There was indeed no doubt about what would happen. One anticipated the triumph of intellect, of humanity, and of foreseeing wisdom, and victory would be secured without the necessity of resorting more to the brute forces of war. The fighting had ceased almost instinctively. There was a constant eager lookout towards the fortress, where one was sure soon to see the white flag floating. A great silence prevailed, in order not to miss hearing the trumpet which was to announce the word, Surrender! Each breathed freely again in the hope that the war would soon be over, and every German praised God for the glorious victory.

Thus it was everywhere round Sedan, except in Bazeilles, for the combat was not over there. The French began it. Horrible deeds were perpetrated, such as history has only recorded in times of the greatest barbarism.

Bearers of wounded soldiers were sent into the village from those places near it, where the wounded were being dressed. Having entered the village, some shots were fired from behind them. They looked round without seeing anybody. They proceeded; again several shots were heard; first one, and then another of them was wounded. If at first some of them thought that these shots were stray ones, which only by accident had taken this direction, they were soon undeceived by the continued firing, and the bearers could not be prevailed upon to enter the village again.*

At last the commander of the reserve troops ordered the houses to be searched. Everywhere armed men and women were found. Whoever resisted was shot, whoever surrendered was taken away prisoner. But some villagers, infatuated by frenzy, thought it to be their duty to increase their efforts in slaying their hated enemies, even in the face of the superior numbers which the latter began to display, and now the Bavarians could be restrained no longer. This was not war. They had to do with a band of

* *Vide* "Princess Alice's Letters," vol. ii. p. 97.

assassins. "Throw firebrands into their houses! set fire to the den of murderers!" was shouted everywhere. From 3 P.M. the village began to burn, and when the evening came, only traces of it were left. Oh, bloody period!* Let us throw over it a veil of shame which one must feel at the recital of all these horrible scenes of brutality and rage against wounded men and corpses, outrages of impotence, devilries committed facing death! The Crown Prince of Prussia had left his post of observation immediately after the general fighting had ceased, and had repaired together with his staff nearer to Sedan, to the same height where the King had his quarters. Close to these heights stood the Bavarian batteries, their guns now turned and facing the fortress.

More than one hour had elapsed since this was surrounded, and yet no offer of surrender. The command was then given that the guns of the Würtemberger division should be placed alongside those of the Bavarians, and that the latter should begin the bombardment of the town. And at once—it was about 5 P.M.—the booming of the cannon began. The French were too powerless to be able to answer even from one single gun. They were given up as lost, and yet there appeared no sign of a desire for a capitulation.

The shells destroyed the roofs and gables of the houses, cutting men and horses to pieces. The

* Othello.

French had not prepared the white flag for the present moment, which they must have foreseen, so they set fire to places here and there, but the ruin was not stopped. A just resentment at this reckless resistance began to take possession of the minds of the Germans. The fear that the French might venture once more on a desperate though useless combat spread through the surrounding army. How willingly would each of these Germans have given up all further glory in exchange for peace. With the most intense attention every one looked towards the walls of the town, whilst shell after shell was flying in that direction. The battle, in which all of them had taken part, appeared to them now as a tragedy, of which they all were the spectators, and for the end of which they looked forward with impatience.

Most of all, the King himself felt painfully irritated at the thought of a prolongation of the combat. Full of desire to put a stop to the scene, he ordered the cannonade to be interrupted, and sent off himself Lieutenant-Colonel von Bronsart with a flag of truce to the gate of the town, offering capitulation to the surrounded army.

This order was given by the King in the same moment when a shell fell in Sedan upon a magazine filled with straw, when the flames and thick smoke burst out. Immediately after the French com-

mander-in-chief made up his mind for agreeing to a capitulation, and the white flag was seen floating over the wall of the town; the gate opened, and the two *Parlementaires* met.

What a general joyful hurrah now broke forth, first amongst the nearest troops, and then rapidly spread to all the battalions and squadrons of the victorious army! the cry of hope for Peace! Everywhere both caps and helmets were thrown up! Everywhere were heard cheers for the King and the Fatherland! Everywhere tears of joy and thanks to God! The dying glorified Him for the victory, together with the living!!!

CHAPTER XIV.

Capitulation particulars—Royal telegrams—Court of Inquiry by Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers on capitulation.

Capitulation.

The 1st of September was a day of misfortune for the French, not only regarding its consequences, but also as to the incidents of the battle since the early morning.

McMahon was at sunrise with the vanguard at Bazeilles. He expected to be attacked only from the south. As usual, the cavalry reconnaisance was left undone, and nothing was known of a turning movement from the north. That was the reason why the commander-in-chief was so far from the centre of the army. When the fire of the Bavarian guns grew more serious, McMahon sent a report about it to the Emperor. The latter was soon on his way to Bazeilles, but before he came to Balan he met the wounded general, who was being carried in the opposite direction. The splinter of a shell had struck the lowest vertebra of his spine and severely wounded him.

Whilst the fighting was going on there arose a dispute amongst the generals about the chief command. Ducrot, the commander of the 1st corps, had received instructions from McMahon about the further dispositions of the battle, and had been intrusted by him with the command of the army. This general ordered at once a retrograde movement of the army along the whole line. The French were to take positions on the high ground nearest to Sedan, and the batteries and the troops were to be concentrated. As one German division after the other was advancing to the attack to try and crush it separately. The execution of this plan had already begun, when General von Wimpffen, who had joined the army only two days, claimed the chief command in consequence of his appointment by the Minister of War, Count Palikao, which he produced in writing, General von Wimpffen having been recalled from Algiers a short time before. It cannot appear strange that Count Palikao, who was unfavourably disposed towards McMahon, and had grave doubts as to the way in which the war was conducted by the latter, should have appointed, in certain eventualities, as commander-in-chief an officer in whom he placed a greater confidence. Ducrot submitted to this decree of the Minister of War, although the Emperor was present, and in consequence of this change in the command of the army all the orders just issued were

countermanded, and the French troops faced about and marched against the enemy. Evidence seems to prove, also, that scarcely was this dispute settled, when another arose between the Emperor and General von Wimpffen; but about the details of these differences only vague and contradictory statements have been made, and the Emperor denied the truth of these differences in a declaration, which later his adjutant-general made in his name. Nevertheless this general persisted in his statement that the Emperor had in fact taken upon himself the command of the army, and had rendered all his (the general's) own efforts useless. General von Wimpffen does not appear to have shown on this day great firmness and energy, but rather hastiness, one-sidedness, and a mind influenced and confused by passions. It seems pretty clear that between 9 and 10 A.M., when the French had somewhat the advantage in their fight against the Bavarians and Saxons, he met the Emperor near Balan, and to the Emperor's question how matters were standing, he answered, "*Sire, well! as well as possible! and we are gaining ground!*" When the Emperor then observed that according to reports sent to him a strong German corps *must be in front of the left wing*, Von Wimpffen said, "*So much the better!* Let them have their way! We shall drive them into the Meuse and gain the battle!"

In spite of the heavy cannonade which soon after

could be heard in the direction of Floing and Illy, this general does not seem to have at once taken satisfactory measures for firm resistance. Not before it was, according to the opinion of other generals, too late, he gave his consent to Ducrot's appeal, to make a counter attack with the whole cavalry, all the artillery at disposal, and two divisions of infantry.

From twelve o'clock the French began to retreat into the town; some of their troops were still in good order, but the great bulk was broken and in confusion. Soon the streets in the suburbs were blocked, and the soldiers who arrived later crushed those in front. Every one struggled to gain an entrance before the others. Some jumped from the walls and swam over the moats. Horsemen in their full accoutrements were seen riding along the walls; and many horses had their legs and ribs broken. All the different troops got mixed up; there was a confused crowding of private soldiers, officers of all ranks, up to the generals, the sound climbing over those who had fallen—a disgraceful scene! Only to the guns they gave way, but many soldiers moving were crushed or mangled. The confusion grew worse and worse. Now and then shells were bursting in the midst of this crowd, which was a shoving, pushing, struggling body of men, and wounded, mangled, and dying were carried along. Such was the state of

things in the southern part of Sedan; its gates and streets in other directions were a little less crowded.

The Emperor had been in the town for some considerable time, but it is reported that he had been present at the fight against the Bavarians near Balan. When the fire of the artillery became more violent, and a shell exploded near him, he withdrew from that quarter of the battlefield, and having heard of the surrounding movement of the enemy northwards, he rode in the direction of Floing, and later he retired from thence too.

A little time after the Emperor, General Wimpffen came into the town, and when he saw the troops in the greatest disorder and confusion, he forced his way through the crowd. It was in vain that he ordered the officers to draw up the masses of troops in some formation, in vain that he himself, brandishing his sword, called out, "En avant!" "Vive la France!" Nobody stirred in answer to his command.

Yet although he was obliged to desist from the attempt to operate on the masses, he conceived a plan, which he discussed with other generals, and which he proposed to the Emperor, which was of collecting 2000 to 3000 horsemen, to break through the Prussian lines and to escape in an eastward direction; in the midst of these the Emperor was to take his place and thus to save his liberty.

How little did General Wimpffen know about what happened outside Sedan ; otherwise how could he think such a plan feasible, even supposing that he would be able to get such a great number of horsemen together. All the generals were opposed to this plan, and the Emperor himself refused to be liberated by such means. No doubt he would have ridden out to face much greater dangers, not only that of captivity, but also that of death.

However, General Wimpffen wanted by all means to try whether the undertaking could not be carried out. A good means of encouraging the soldiers now occurred to him. He mounted his horse again and made his way through the crowd. "*Bazaine has arrived!*" he cried ; "*Bazaine is at hand* in the rear of the enemy ! " Nobody asked from whom he had got that information. It did not occur to anybody that it was impossible for people in the town to obtain such news. But the more incredible the rumour, the more it inflamed their minds, and a few thousand horsemen were indeed ready within a short time to follow him out of the town. Half an hour later General Wimpffen returned and confessed to the impossibility of such an undertaking, and that, in his opinion, nothing was left but to surrender. He had played his last trump. And what did he do then ? He withdrew to his quarters, and wrote a well-composed letter to the Emperor, the last words of which were :

"I have not been able to finish the day with a glorious exploit, and I believe therefore that it is my duty to tender my resignation."

This step of the commander-in-chief was quite unexpected. That the army could be led any longer was, according to General Wimpffen's own confession, quite out of the question. The only point now was, who was to be intrusted with the care of carrying on the negotiations about a capitulation. The Emperor did not, of course, accede to this request of the general. He sent him, on the contrary, word saying that General Wimpffen had done his duty during the battle, and that he must continue doing it. The moment arrived at last, and on the part of the French their resolution was announced to capitulate by hoisting a flag of truce.

In the meantime, the Emperor had taken the necessary steps for obtaining that for which General Wimpffen had just been unsuccessful, namely, the exemption of his person from the fate of his army. He had, like General Wimpffen, written a letter addressed to a now mightier personage, the King of Prussia.

The Emperor said in his letter: "As I have not been able to die in the midst of my troops, it only remains to me to resign my sword into the hands of your Majesty."

The adjutant of the Emperor, General Count Reille, his breast covered with the Crimean and

the 1859 orders and medals, leaning on a stick, and uncovered, handed this letter to the King of Prussia.

The King received the letter well in accordance with his own sincerity and noble-mindness. In his answer he reminded the Emperor, in a way least likely to hurt his feelings, that the details of the capitulation must refer chiefly to the fate of the French army, and replying thus: "Regretting the circumstances under which we meet, I accept the sword of your Majesty, and pray you to name one of your officers, provided with full powers, to treat for the capitulation of the army, which has so gallantly fought under your command. On my own part I have designated General von Moltke for this purpose."

With this answer General Reille was sent back to the Emperor.

In the evening, about nine o'clock, the negotiations about the capitulation were commenced between General von Moltke and General von Wimpffen. The latter had come to this end from Sedan to Donchery. General Moltke demanded that the whole French army should be prisoners of war, and all the war material, consisting of arms, colours, eagles, horses, &c., should be given up to the victor.

They discussed and pondered for a long time, and General von Wimpffen tried to obtain more favourable conditions, but General von Moltke stated and

explained thus the position of the French forces. "The French army amounts at present to 80,000 men and is surrounded by our own. Our artillery stands in positions from which our batteries can destroy the town in less than two hours. The French troops can only get out of the town through the gates, without having any chance of forming again; they have only provisions for one day and they are nearly without ammunition. Under these circumstances a prolonged resistance would be nothing less than a useless slaughter, and the responsibility for it would rest with those who could have hindered it and have not done so."

At last, as General von Wimpffen did not like to take the whole responsibility for the capitulation upon himself alone, and asked for time for consideration, it was granted to him up to nine o'clock next morning. In the council of war, which was summoned at once in Sedan, thirty generals voted in favour of the capitulation, two only against it.

In the course of the next forenoon the details of the capitulation were settled. The whole army under the command of General von Wimpffen were declared prisoners of war. All ammunition and war material was to be delivered up, and the fortress of Sedan was handed over to the King of Prussia. Following the precedents of previous similar cases, all officers who would give in writing their word of honour not

to take up arms before the termination of the war, and not to act contrary to the interest of Germany, were allowed to keep their arms. Those officers who refused to give their word of honour were distributed among the different corps and regiments and led away into captivity together with the soldiers.

The effect of the victory of Sedan is represented in the following details: French prisoners during the battle, 25,000 men. Capitulated, 85,000 men, amongst them 1 marshal (McMahon), 39 generals, 230 staff-officers, and about 3000 other commissioned officers; 14,000 wounded men delivered up. Not fallen into the hands of the Germans, but unable to take further part in the war: 14,500 men, with 12,000 horses, who had succeeded, during the night, in escaping across the Belgian frontier, where they were disarmed. The booty of war consisted in: the eagles of all regiments,* 70 mitrailleuses, 330 field guns, 150 siege guns, 10,000 horses, not to speak of the ammunition waggons, the chassepots and other weapons of war, sabres, cuirasses, lances, and many hundredweight casks of gunpowder, &c. Two hours after signing of the capitulation both the Crown Princes with their armies were on the march to Paris, which they invested on the 19th of September.

* The 2d Zouaves buried its Eagle with its Legion of Honour, burnt its colours, and divided the fringe among its officers. This *Eagle of Magenta*, shot through its breast, is still with the regiment. The only flag lost by the Germans was at Dijon, and refound there after a few days.—H. B. F.

TELEGRAMS.

(1.) "*King to Queen.*

"BATTLEFIELD, SEDAN, *1st September*,
"3.15 P.M.

"Since 7.30 A.M. continuous and victorious battle all round Sedan. Guard, 4, 5, 11, and 12 corps, and Bavarian, Würtemburger, and Baden divisions. Enemy thrown back on town.

"WILHELM."

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(2). "SEDAN, *2d September*, 1.30 P.M.

"Capitulation whereby whole Army of Sedan are prisoners has just been arranged with General Von Wimpffen, who was in command in place of McMahon. Emperor only gave himself up to me, as he was not in command, and gives up all the government in Paris. His residence I determine after a rendezvous with him about to take place. What a turn with God's help! WILHELM."

(3.) FURTHER DETAILS OF BATTLE.

"*King to Queen.*

"VARENNES, *4th September*, 8 A.M.

"What a touching moment the meeting with Napoleon! He was bent, but noble in bearing, and

manner. I have given him Wilhelmshöhe near Cassel for a residence. Meeting took place in a little chateau in front of western glacis of Sedan. From thence I rode through the army lines around Sedan. You can imagine the reception by the troops. It is impossible for me here to describe it. At the fall of the day, 8.30 P.M., I had been five hours in the saddle, and returned here only at 1 A.M. God help us further! WILHELM."

CHAPTER XV.

COURT OF INQUIRY ON THE CAPITULATION OF SEDAN.

WITHOUT occupying itself with the more political than military causes which induced the Government of the Regency to order the very dangerous expedition of the Army of Chalons, in itself incomplete in reorganisation, to attempt the succour of Bazaine, this Council cannot also appreciate the manner in which this was conducted, up to the moment when Marshal McMahon, on account of his wound, gave up the command to General Ducrot, one of his lieutenants. The troops of the above army, anything but confident of themselves, were subject to great delays in their march, by the uncertainty in the plan of campaign, and irregularity in their distribution, by the bad weather to which they were exposed, the surprises of the enemy, and the defeat of the 5th corps; all these acting on them mentally, attacked and weakened, and made them arrive in a state of disorder at Sedan. General Ducrot, who had received

over the command, regarded and considered the situation, and seeing the danger which the army ran in letting itself be shut up in Sedan, ordered at once a retreat on Mezières, the only route which appeared to him open; but hardly an hour had elapsed, and when his orders were about being put into execution, General Wimpffen prevailed by means of a letter from the Minister of War in getting the command-in-chief handed over to him, and disapproving of the measure of Ducrot, *yet having no definite plan of his own* (*as he himself allows*), but counting on making a combination less likely to lead to such disastrous results, ordered the retaking of the positions abandoned by the first orders.

From this moment General Wimpffen assumed all the responsibility of the command.

This changing threw the army into greater disorder. The new general-in-chief did not make himself completely obeyed, or did not know how to do so. The 1st corps did not keep its positions, which were at once occupied by the enemy, and the 7th was also driven back on Sedan, where one and the other brought such a state of confusion that the gates had to be closed.

During this time General Von Wimpffen, seeing the vigorous resistance of the 12th corps, and that the attack of the Bavarians on Bazeilles grew weak, conceived the project of concentrating all his forces

on his right, and of piercing the enemy's line by a rush on Carignan and Montmedy.

With this end he ordered the 1st corps to come and join him, and the 7th corps to support it. These corps, by their precipitate retreat on Sedan, were not at all in the condition to reply to his call; at the same time General Wimpffen, at the head of a body of troops of the Marine, two battalions of Zouaves, and the 45th Regiment, threw himself on the enemy and advanced on Balan to form co-operation with the troops stationed at that point, when on arriving at that place where he supposed they were, he found no one. The 12th corps had also fled into Sedan. In going to the Balan Gate, Von Wimpffen met General Le Brun, who, followed by a man carrying a white flag, was on his way to demand an armistice. The general-in-chief at once stopped this, and at the head of 200 men that he was able to bring together, he made a dash on the enemy, but finding his effort impotent he himself re-entered Sedan.

On the re-assembling of the troops on the place the Emperor, to stop the useless effusion of blood, without consulting the general-in-chief, nor the commanders of the corps, as well as those unanimously elected to the council, had made them hoist the white flag on the citadel.

When the general-in-chief advanced on Balan for

a last effort he was approached by an orderly officer of the Emperor, who requested him to go to the head-quarters of the enemy to demand a capitulation. He refused to do so at first, but on account of his last effort he then yielded to the wishes of his sovereign.

The Council of Inquiry can easily understand the unfortunate consequences to the army, by the changing three times the general in command in only a few hours, and also the defective plans of operation resulting therefrom. They can appreciate also the different combinations which produced successively the chances of success and failure, and it is considered by them that the project of General Ducrot was the most rational; for admitting that the concentration on the left might succeed, which it is true was difficult, and that after a vigorous effort one could open the route towards Mezières, in any case one might have been able at least to save a good portion of the army by throwing it on Belgian soil.

They must also express their opinion that to demand the command of the army by means of a letter from the Minister of War *without, as confessed, any* definite plan of operation, and in the hope after driving the Bavarians into the Meuse to beat back the enemy's right wing, and thus to open a passage by Carignan and Montmedy, General Von Wimpffen showed conceptions neither plausible nor justifiable,

and a great part of the responsibility for the terrible misfortunes must rest on him for the necessity for the capitulation; and it is necessary to define the part of the responsibility which falls on this general for the *terms* of this.

It seems proved to them that the hoisting of the white flag on the citadel by order of the sovereign without counsel with his general, absolves him from the responsibility of this act, which was taken by the Emperor himself.

The Council must accord some praise to General Von Wimpffen for constantly refusing to capitulate, but they must also express their opinion that having accepted negotiations he was wrong in not maintaining the principles consented to by the enemy at the first interview (which he explained to the council of war held the same morning)—"*To leave all officers in possession of their arms and baggage,*" *this article unfortunately modified* in favour *only of those officers* who on returning to their homes gave their words of honour not to serve against the enemy during the war.

The Council blames most strongly General Von Wimpffen for having admitted this exception, contrary to Article 256 of the Decree of 13th October 1863, which lays it down for officers "*never to separate their lot from the lot of their men.*" An exception

which tends to weaken in officers the sentiments of duty and resistance to the enemy, and is a premium to feebleness of character.

(Signed)

President of the Court,

BARAGUAY D'HILLIERS.

NOTE.—Further on will be found this decree more *in extenso.*

THE RETREAT ON METZ, AUGUST 19, 1870,

AND

THE REAL INCIDENTS

OF

THE BLOCKADE OF THE FRENCH.

CHAPTER XVI.

Retreat after Gravelotte on Metz—Positions of French and Germans—Change of these after the 23d of August—Remarks on breaking through blockades, by a Prussian writer—Battle of Noisseville, 31st August and 1st September.

Retreat on Metz.

On the receipt by Bazaine of the intelligence of the enveloping of, and defeat of the 6th and 4th corps on the night of the 18th, the following orders were issued by him for retreat, and which we may consider as the end of the great military operations round Metz. By these orders, as indicated, the army was to form a vast semicircle on the left bank of the Moselle, preserving the order which it had at night; the left resting on the south glacis of Fort Moselle, and the right on the north glacis of the same fort; the front covered by Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville.

The dispositions were as follows, viz.:—

"The 2d corps will march on Longeville, and to the rear of that village, its left on Fort Moselle, its right leaning on St. Quentin, and keeping touch with the left of No. 3 corps.

"The 3d corps will have its right on the hillock of Tignomont, its centre on the Col-de-Lessy, and will extend by its left as far as the north declivities of St. Quentin, and to the hillock of Charles-Quint. It will construct a battery of twenty-two guns in the quarries of Plappeville to enfilade the ravine of Lessy, and another in the advanced work of St. Quentin.

"The 4th will have its left on Tignomont, with a strong battery and earthworks at the hillock de Gonpillon; its right will extend itself as far as Sassonnet.

"The 6th corps will have its right at the north salient of Fort Moselle, its left at Sassonnet.

"The Guard will quit its camp at present, and move to the foot of the hillocks of St. Quentin; its right at La Ronde, its left at the foot of the heights at the extremity of the Ban St. Martin.

"The cavalry division of reserve will camp in the Ile Chambière.

"The troops will commence their movements at 4 A.M. without any sounding of bugles to awaken the attention of the enemy."

The Army of the Rhine preserved these positions till the 20th of August. On that day the 3d corps was transferred to the right bank of the Moselle to encamp between Forts St. Quentin and St. Julien. Finally, on the 26th, the 2d corps took up a position in front of Montigny from the Seille to the Moselle.

Commencing from this date, the positions occupied by each corps-d'armée were as follows, viz. :—

The 2d corps (Froissart), encamped at Montigny, had its right on the Moselle and its left on the Seille, its front bordering the embankment of the railroad. Its advanced posts at the farm of Bradin, and at La-Grange-aux-Ormes. Head-quarters at Montigny.

The 3d corps (Lebœuf), encamped to the east of the town, had its right on Fort St. Quenlen, its left on Fort St. Julien, its advanced posts at Borny, at the farm of Bellecroix and the wood of Grimont, its head-quarters being at St. Julien.

The 4th corps (De L'Admirault) stretched from Longeville to Lorry on the hillocks of St. Quentin, its advanced posts being at Moulins, Longeau, St. Ruffine, and the woods of Lorry. Head-quarters at Plappeville.

The 6th corps (Canrobert) rested on the plain of Woippy, with its right on the Moselle, its left stretched towards Lorry, its advanced posts at Thury, St. Eloy, and Woippy, its head-quarters at the mansion of the Jesuits, at Devant-les-Ponts.

The Imperial Guard, encamped in rear of the 4th and 6th corps, had its head-quarters at La Ronde, its right around this hillock, and its left on the plateau in rear of Plappeville.

The cavalry of the reserve encamped on the island of Chambière.

The head-quarters of the entire army was at Ban St. Martin.

From this moment the Army of the Rhine had ceased to exist; it had now become the Army of Metz, and, as we shall see, was not to leave its entrenched camp, in which it had taken refuge, till it was disarmed and its troops had become prisoners of war.

Blockade.

After Bazaine had got his forces into the positions that he meant to defend, and covered by his great forts, the Germans decided to invest the whole place by the 1st and 2d armies, both being placed under the supreme command of H.R.H. Prince Frederick Charles.

A reference should now be made to the map to see the topography of the neighbourhood.

Metz is situated at the base of two great hills, on which are the strong fortresses of St. Quentin and Plappeville, on the left bank of the Moselle, running through the town, and forming the islands of Chambière and St. Symphorien. Commencing from the right bank of the Moselle eastward, the reader should mark the following places :—

Olgy, Malroy, Charley, St. Barbe, Noisseville, Courcelles-sur-Nied, Chesney, Macleaves, Pouilly, Faye, Coony, Jouey-aux-Arches ; a little north of this last

place, Ars-sur-Moselle; then proceeding across this river to its left bank, Rozerieulles, Gravelotte, Rezonville, St. Marcel, Doncourt, Montigny-la-Grange, Amanvilliers, Jerusalem, St. Privat, Roncourt, Melancourt, Féves, Sémécourt, Maizières-les-Metz, and round again to the Moselle and Olgy.

Having now got under the eye the above places, the German dispositions on the 19th were made as follows:—

The 1st, 2d, 3d, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th corps, and 1st and 3d divisions of cavalry, about 220,000 men, assembled round Metz, and were further reinforced by the 3d division of the landwehr of Kummer, about 20,000 men, making in all the army of investment 240,000 or thereabouts.

The 1st Army, except 8th corps, were to invest Metz on the right bank, the 2d Army on the left bank of the Moselle. They occupied the following positions:—

On the right bank, the 3d division of landwehr (Kummer), from Malroy to Charley; 1st corps (Manteufel), from St. Barbe to Courcelles-sur-Nied; 7th corps (Zastrow), from Pouilly to Ars-sur-Moselle.

On the left bank, the 10th corps (Voigts-Rhetz), from Maizières to Sémécourt, and the plain from the left bank of the Moselle to the north of Woippy; the 2d corps (Fransecki) from Féves to Montigny-la-Grange; the 8th (Von Gœben) on the plateau of the left bank at Gravelotte; the 9th (Manstein) at Ron-

court, in case of McMahon arriving from the north; 3d (Alvensleben, II.) at Briey. Head-quarters 2d Army at Melancourt, that of 1st Army at Ars-sur-Moselle.

These movements were terminated on the 21st August; but as soon as the battle of Sedan had been fought, that is, from the 2d September, the investing army at once took definitively the following positions, which it retained till the capitulation of Metz:—

The 3d division (Kummer) landwehr continued encamped from Malroy to Charley; head-quarters at Olgy.

The 1st corps between St. Barbe and Courcelles-sur-Nied; head-quarters, St. Barbe.

7th corps from Chesney to Jouyaux Arches; head-quarters, Pouilly.

8th corps, Ars-sur-Moselle across as far as Montigny-la-Grange; head-quarters, Gravelotte.

10th corps closed the circle of investment on left bank, stretching from the heights of Saulnëy and Féves to the Moselle, and joining hands with the 3d division (Kummer), its head-quarters being at Maizières-les-Metz.

The 9th corps, placed outside the line of investment, occupied the heights from St. Privat to Melancourt and across the Briey Road at Jerusalem; head-quarters, Melancourt.

The 2d corps was placed "*à cheval*" on the Orne,

stretching from Briey to Doncourt; head-quarters, the latter place; and a new corps, the 13th, on the Strasburg road.

Finally the 3d corps, forming the reserve, stretched from St. Marcel to Gorze.

The 1st and 3d cavalry divisions were encamped on the right bank from Fey to Macleaves, and in direct communication with the head-quarters of Prince Frederick Charles at Corny.

From this moment the Army of Metz existed no longer—the period of the blockade commenced.

The investment undertaken by an army of 240,000 men or thereabout, against 140,000 grouped in bodies between the forts of a place or fortress of the very first order, was accomplished with a rigour which, starting from the 1st of September, prevented any communications, except, perhaps, verbal intelligence, from passing through the German lines. The troops employed in this blockade were established in position in three lines, occupied successively, and sharing regularly the service of advanced posts, supports, and reserves. The line of advanced posts nearest to the besieged, and generally within range of heavy guns, was made up of a continuous chain of vedettes and sentries, placed two and two at distances of from twenty-eight to fifty-six yards apart, sometimes in the open, but taking cover as occasion required. The cavalry took its part in this service in various numbers

placed as advanced vedettes, according to the nature of the ground and the exigencies of the service.

The supports formed the second line, which in reality was the veritable line of defence of the Germans. In case of attack this line, placed between the outpost line and the reserves, nearer the former than the latter, was composed of regiments forming brigade with the troops of the first line. It held an advantageous command over all points, by means of shelter trenches, earthworks, and redoubts, with which it was strengthened. In case of attack by superior forces, the German gros, or in English the outpost reserve, retired on it, as also the pickets and feldwache, and to it marched forward the main reserves or rallying line in case of necessity.

The third line was that of reserves formed by the second brigade of the division. It was sometimes the head-quarters of the division, which was often further in rear of this line. The troops composing it were established in the villages and sometimes billeted in the houses.

These three lines had divided between them a roster of service which lasted three weeks; each line was in consequence occupied by the troops seven to eight days. The vedettes and sentries had one night on, and two off duty; and the troops in the first line seven days on, and fourteen days off, as supports and in reserve. The blockade of Metz, there-

fore, was really composed of five lines, in German thus—

Outpost line: (1) Feldwache, (2) pickets, (3) gros.
Supporting line.
Rallying line.

In English thus—

Outpost line: (1) Pickets, (2) supports, (3) reserve.
Supporting line.
Rallying line.

The distances varied according to the nature of the ground, and the favourable and unfavourable positions for placing the men. The intervals left free between the groups in each line, when these extended themselves from their centre along the circumference ring, formed a sort of "*groups in echelons*," each body placing itself before an interval. The artillery and the battery works were on the same line with the supports. The parks, columns of munitions, and the cavalry corps formed in rear of the camps, which the besieged could see plainly from the top of Fort St. Quentin or Metz cathedral. Observatories were placed at various points and in connection by telegraph.

The army of investment occupied a circumference of twenty-five miles or thereabouts, and the fortified lines of its advanced posts had a development of nearly thirty.

The blockade of Metz, effected on the 20th of

August, was raised the 29th of October, the day of the capitulation, having lasted seventy-two days. This gave into the power of Germany the following—

137,750 prisoners capable of bearing arms,
20,000 of division Levancoupet forming garrison,
15,000 sick and wounded,

173,000 men or thereabouts.

3 marshals of France, 71 generals, 6000 officers, 45 stands of colours * with eagles, 66 mitrailleuses, 541 field guns, 800 guns of position, 200,000 rifles, and great quantities of munitions of war.

Such was for the Fatherland the result of this brilliant campaign of Metz.

It has been stated that the blockading army was nominally 240,000 men; but it never reached that number, for at first the losses had not been made good, and from the hard work and duty entailed on the besiegers, much of the space occupied being quite unsheltered, the sick and non-effectives increased rapidly from the commencement.

It may be reckoned that over 20,000 fugitives from the environs took refuge in Metz when the blockade was established, thereby increasing by that number the garrison of 173,000 to nearly 200,000 mouths to feed besides inhabitants.

At first the excessive bad weather seems to have

* Its eagle and colours were destroyed by the 76th regiment, and the Imperial Guard had its colours burnt before a general of artillery on refusing to give them up. The former is one of the nine decorated eagles in the French army, the others being 2d and 3d Zouaves, 54th, 57th, 99th of Line, 3d Tirailleurs, and 1st Chasseurs d'Afrique.—H.B.F.

prevented Bazaine from effecting any movement; but a few days afterwards, and when intelligence had reached him of the departure of two German corps for the Army of the Meuse, he made a strong attack, and under circumstances that were on the whole favourable, and which some of the French reports say was in order to co-operate with McMahon, who he heard had arrived at Stenay, *and not in order to escape* with his army. His despatch is given later on.

A Prussian writer reasons as follows on the subject:—

"(1) An army such as Bazaine's must fight a regular battle, and so open a passage; (2) must be prepared to continue the fighting when again attacked; (3) must have a large supply of ammunition small and large, every other obstacle to his march being removed. At the commencement the convoy cannot be in front, but after the passage is forced, must with a strong advanced guard, and protected by a large force, particularly of cavalry, on both flanks, make its way on, and a strong rearguard being also necessary to keep the enemy in check."

The writer gives the length of the convoy *with doubled files*, and on a good road, as five miles. But the army, to act successfully, should dispose of three parallel ones.* If the enemy is defeated the first day the march may commence between the night of the

* See Colonel Knollys's article, *Army and Navy Magazine*, Jan. 1887.

first and second day; and if the Marshal had succeeded on the first, the movement from Metz would have become unnecessary, for if Bazaine had by any means obtained in any place the advantage, he neutralised to a great extent McMahon's defeat, as large bodies of troops must been sent to Metz, and not enough left for the march on Paris, besides which Bazaine could have got more supplies from the right banks of Moselle, and so continued doing this. Consequently there may seem a probability that he had not the idea of quitting Metz by this sortie, but of establishing himself on the right bank of the river, and this reasoning is for the consideration of readers.

On the 26th August, Bazaine had consulted all the commanders of his five corps as to breaking through the German lines * (but he kept them quite ignorant of McMahon's despatch to him).

1. General Soleille, chief of artillery, was of opinion that the army might be wanted for political reasons, and compared its position with that of the army in 1814.

2. General Froissart concurred in the above opinion, and thought the army in a better condition for the defensive than offensive.

3. Marshal Canrobert was of opinion that the immense trains and impedimenta were against breaking through, but was of opinion that they should never

* A tempest postponed the attack of Bazaine till the 31st August.

stop attacking the enemy; in fact, striking, and striking like a griffin with its two paws, and that this was an absolute necessity.

4. General Bourbaki was of opinion that nothing was to be done without sufficient munitions of war and for defence.

5. Marshal Lebœuf was for preserving the army intact, and said he was at the beginning of the campaign for concentrating, in place of deploying on the frontier.

6. General Coffinières said the place was ill supplied, and agreed with Soleille.

7. General de L'Admirault agreed with Canrobert.

Instructions of Bazaine for the attack on the plateau of St. Barbe, by Noisseville, 31st August.

"The 3d corps (Lebœuf) will attack the plateau by the left (Chateau de Chanly), and get into position by the woods there, and at Avancy.

"The 4th corps (L'Admirault) will attack the position of St. Barbe by the right (Villers, l'Orme, Frilly, and Vremy), and do all in its power to take the position at Saussy-lez-Vigy.

"The 6th corps (Canrobert) will attack the positions in front of Chievilles, Charley, Malroy, and march on Antilly, where it will take position, resting its left on Argency.

"The 2d corps (Froissart) will follow the route of

the 3d, watching the right, and is placed under the orders of Marshal Lebœuf.

"The Guard (Bourbaki) will be in reserve."

Bazaine writes: "In case of success in gaining Thionville by way of Bethelainville and Redange with the 3d, 4th, and 6th corps, sending the Guard and 2d corps by the route of Malroy, keeping touch with the river on the left if necessary, by this movement I shall avoid the river Orne, left affluent of the Moselle.

"In taking St. Barbe as objective I shall leave the Germans in doubt as to my movements, whether I continue my march to the north? or cut off their communications?

"As I wished to draw the enemy to the right bank, I did not like to commence the action too early (*this is for the attention of the reader*), in order to give him time for a portion of his force on the left bank to engage on the right bank. The principal body of the enemy once having got to the right bank, the army of McMahon had every facility for approaching on the other side. I had nothing then to fear in my march on Thionville of a flank attack by the forces investing Metz on the left bank, which, without that, could descend the Moselle parallel to me, and perhaps gaining on me with forces sufficient for anxiety on my part. In fact, I avoided the route which follows the course of the valley commanded by

the heights, which were in the power of the Germans on both banks. The forest guides acted as mine.

"About 2 P.M. I gave the signal for attack. On account of delay and indecision the action did not begin till 4 P.M., that is to say, the delay in execution of my orders, and which I repeated."

The above is the explanation of Bazaine, and nearly all agree in considering that much of the responsibility for the want of success rests with Lebœuf, who seems all through the campaign to have been as unfortunate as Froissart.

Battle of Noisseville, 31st August and 1st September.

(French account.)

As Bazaine had kept secret from his generals McMahon's despatch saying he would be between Vouziers and Montmedy, and stating the urgency of a sortie, the greater part of the council of 26th August voted for remaining at Metz, but on the 29th a despatch from the commandant of Thionville arriving, which we remember also occurred at Sedan, Bazaine got ready for his attempt on 31st.

Despatch.

"General Ducrot commands army of McMahon, and will be 29th (to-day) at Stenay with left of

army. General Douay has the right wing on the Meuse ready to march on hearing the first sound of cannon."

Thinking then that McMahon's army was about forty miles off only, he made up his mind to gain the plateau of St. Barbe on the 31st.

The attack, as before stated, commenced at 2.30 P.M., but the troops were not really engaged before 4 P.M. (too late). The fighting was furious, and the troops captured Noisseville and Montoy, but could not get further than Servigny. The enemy returning during the night in great force under Mantuffel, and this village (Servigny) was retaken. It had been quite neglected as to reinforcements, and being attacked by an entire Prussian corps, and in flames, it was evacuated.

But what was Bazaine doing? Lebœuf had neglected the sounds of the bugles for help at Servigny, and at daybreak the action recommenced in a fog which hindered movements. The endeavours to retake the position of the preceding night failed. Bazaine says: "At 9 A.M. I sent orders for all commanders to hold their ground *at any price*, and prepared with the Guard and ten regiments of cavalry for a decisive attack on St. Barbe; at 10 A.M., when I was on the point of making the advance, I received news from Marshal Lebœuf as follows, *written in pencil*:—

"'Bastoul's division having retreated an hour ago, *contrary to my orders*, my right flank is entirely uncovered. I am enveloped both by the fire of the enemy, and his attacking columns in front and flank. After having held my position till the last moment, I have been obliged to beat a retreat.

(Signed) 'LEBŒUF.'"

The above (Lebœuf's statement was from hearsay, and is denied by General Froissart, who says: "It is an enormous exaggeration. The movement of 500 to 600 metres in rear, that General Bastoul made in good order and slowly, could not have the consequences you (Bazaine) suppose. It was not any retreat, and only took place on seeing the division of Montaudon (3d Lebœuf's corps) retire *precipitately*. It retook its position immediately, and continued to hold it. Marshal Lebœuf gave his *own orders* to it all through the action. He got before a Prussian battery, had his chief of staff Manéque, killed, and then the retreat of his right wing ran all through the force." *

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BAZAINE.

Many charges have at least been made under great

* "The action cost us 4 generals—Montaudon, Manéque, Osmont Lafaille—142 officers, 3547 men, showing how desperately the officers fought."—*Froissart.*

excitement, and on reports which are not strictly worthy of belief. Others have arisen from the publication of letters and reports in the newspapers, particularly those of Belgium, to whom many officers under Bazaine's command addressed themselves. At the same time one cannot ignore the fact that the court-martial which tried Bazaine and found him guilty, was presided over by one of the best and most honest soldiers of France, the Duc d'Aumale. One accusation up to the present day as declared at Metz is, that the provisions at the capitulation had not been entirely expended; but on the contrary plenty of provisions were in the end found in Forts Plappeville and St. Quentin, and that beef was absolutely sold by German soldiers to Jews at something like 10 pfennings per pound after the capitulation. Another charge, unproved, was "that Bazaine was seen in company with Prince Frederick Charles in private clothes and at interviews, when the latter had his head-quarters at Frascati, within range of the guns of the Metz forts, which did not fire on it by order of Bazaine." The accusation, however, is still adhered to by many French.*

It will be remembered that at the battle of the 18th August (Gravelotte), the Marshal was self-accused of having been in Metz till four o'clock in the after-

* There would have been no use in shelling Frascati, a handsome chateau, because the Prince would not have inhabited it, but removed to the rear.

noon in place of commanding on the battlefield, and that he then went up to Fort Plappeville. Another accusation made, is said to be that of the veteran Changarnier declaring that he was not there at all, but at Metz, hence his ignorance of the critical position of the right wing, and the non-sending of either the Imperial Guard or reserve artillery to reinforce it till after 6 P.M.*

On the other hand, it has been generally allowed that offensive movements were taken against the German right *above Gravelotte* at about 6 P.M., which placed the Germans in a most dangerous position, and that he could not but retain at all events a portion of the Guard in rear of his left wing, where the fighting was more terrible than in any part of the field during the entire day, that at St. Privat included. Victory here being necessary to the Germans, as well as at St. Privat, to decide the fortune of the day, and was settled by the arrival, as before stated, of the 2d corps.

With regard to the proposed plan which had been spoken of—the necessity for his sending about 10,000 men to escape out of Metz, during an attack in force,

* General Ambert remarks that he did not command in person on 18th, because he remained at St. Quentin and Plappeville, to receive the telegrams and signals sent from the summit of Metz Cathedral, but that no finer opportunity for display of tactics of a great captain could have occurred with the two armies fighting parallel to each other like the great classical battles of past times, and also is of opinion that the right wing of the Germans was all but in retreat at 6 P.M.

these to make their way to the capital, as the nucleus of several armies forming for further defence, all things considered, the reader will probably think this a very wild plan, and unlikely to succeed, considering how Metz was surrounded. Their departure must have been at once known. Telegrams would have been despatched everywhere; two armies were between Metz and the capital, and clouds of cavalry at command. It seems to have been also forgotten that on the 1st September over 12,000 French cavalry and infantry escaped across the Belgian frontier, so that it would have been much easier for these to have made their way to the capital, which they, after depositing their arms, were free to do, than for the same number to escape from Metz.

The month of September having passed without any great effort, on the 2d October, and again on the 7th, Bazaine made sorties below Metz. That on the 7th was a most desperate one on the main German position, which was far too strong to have been carried, although the voltigeurs of the Guard here covered themselves with glory at Ladonchamps. The accusation of incapacity rests on Bazaine's not attacking with sufficient forces in his sorties. The object of one of these sorties some say to have been to gain the Thionville road, and concentrate on the neutral state of Luxembourg and escape captivity.

The attempts, however, having failed, and the

Marshal getting lower in fighting power every day from sick, loss of horses, wounded, he commenced to treat with the German head-quarters for deliverance, but his terms, considering his position, were so preposterous, unless they covered something still a secret, that they were at once refused by Prince Frederick Charles, and, as it was supposed that famine was approaching, he was obliged to make the same terms (*unconditional surrender of all*) as those of the Emperor and army at Sedan.

Upon this capitulation were based various accusations against him—such as treason; the capitulation before he was really forced to the last extremity; his understanding with Prince Frederick Charles and the Germans "*that a Government should be formed by France*, and probably the young Prince proclaimed, Bazaine being made Regent, as the creature of the Imperial dynasty."

The accusation made by De Bisson "of Bazaine refusing him later on 20,000 men to break through the investing army and to make a passage to Luxembourg, as also his second accusation that he even refused him 10,000 men to *carry the batteries at Ars-sur-Moselle*, and penetrate to the German head-quarters," have in the minds of all capable of judging coolly, been dismissed as wild bravado.

One of the greatest accusations against Bazaine was by the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, who

in his report insists that Changarnier was his chief accuser, and uses the following as his words:—

"Bazaine was incapable of commanding so large a force; he could not move such a body of men, nor operate with them; he had no judgment, no foresight; he was an egoist, and thought of nothing but his own glorification, not the honour of his country. He thought all the time that peace would have been proclaimed, and that he, with reputation intact, would have left Metz with 150,000 men, the flower of the army. Bazaine should have escaped between 21st and 31st August, and that it became impossible after the end of September." He also is made to state *by others* that the attempts at sortie were really feigned, except on the part of the soldiers; and, finally, that at Gravelotte, where he (Changarnier) passed the night under the historic tree, the battle was between 300,000 Germans *versus* 150,000 French, Bazaine being absent.

If this were correct, Changarnier being chosen as Envoy looks strange! There is an old proverb that applies well to courts, martial or civil: "That an accuser saying too much will in many instances damage the case." On looking at these remarks, which others deny were ever uttered by Changarnier, the very fact of his statement of the numbers engaged, 300,000 against 150,000 at Gravelotte, and Bazaine getting free with 150,000 of the flower of

the French army, after all his losses, will throw a doubt on his ever having made such statements,* for he knew well these numbers are overrated. The most dangerous accusation against Bazaine seems to be, that on account of his being a complete creature and *protegé* of the Imperial family, and pushed on by their influence beyond any merit shown by him, over the heads of even men like McMahon and Canrobert, when he saw his master dethroned, the government overturned, and his own position so injured, he would not make supreme efforts "*pour* LA PATRIE," throwing all interested motives aside. In favour of this it will be remembered that Canrobert commanded the French army in the Crimea at one time, Bazaine being a simple colonel, and McMahon colonel till the taking of the Malakoff, then brigadier. That Canrobert and McMahon both went through (with glory) the brilliant war of 1859, the hero of Magenta being made a duke, and yet they both found Bazaine in superior command in the war of 1870; in the case of Canrobert, Bazaine being his direct commanding officer, and with no services as general excepting the inglorious and unfortunate Mexican war. The above will be shown at once by reference to Bazaine's

* General Changarnier, however, in a speech to the National Assembly, made use of the following words: "Bazaine is a good lieutenant, brave, but incapable to command a great army." But was he capable of judging Bazaine? as he had never had any fighting except against Africans and Arabs.

antecedents and commissions, which run thus, and prove that he carried more than the traditional baton in his knapsack.

Private in 37th regiment of line	March 21, 1831.
Corporal	July 8, 1831.
Sergeant-Fourrier (Q.-M. Sergeant)	Jan. 13, 1832.
Sergeant-Major	Nov. 4, 1832.
Sub-Lieutenant	Nov. 2, 1833.
Captain	Dec. 15, 1837.
(Here promotion from ranks in French army *generally* comes to an end, but Bazaine became)	
Chef de Battaillon	March 15, 1844.
Lieutenant-Colonel	April 11, 1848.
Colonel (and in Crimea)	June 4, 1856.
Brigadier-General	Aug. 14, 1860.
General of Division	Sept. 15, 1865.
Marshal of France	Sept. 8, 1866.
(Commanding Army of Rhine)	Aug. 12, 1870.

Certainly on remarking these later dates there does seem some favouritism on the part of the ruler of the French, particularly when the rank of a Marshal of France is considerably more transcendent than in any other country.*

Capitulation.

It may well be conceived then the irritation of Bazaine at the treatment of the Emperor and Empress,

* General Ambert in his work states: "Because Bazaine had risen from simple soldier (and never gone through the military schools), it was thought he must have genius; and not content with promoting him to the same grade as the other marshals of France, he was elevated above them all."

and his determination to assist no longer the Republicans. There is also another point which may be put forward, viz.: It is in evidence that there was much dissatisfaction among officers high and low, against Bazaine's operations in Metz, and that a brochure was written and circulated, and two engineer officers were placed in arrest.

When the time for capitulation came, the Marshal knew what an uproar would take place on being called on to surrender their eagles, and it seems clear that he ordered Marshal Canrobert to promulgate in the orders to generals of divisions, that the eagles would *be burnt* at the arsenal on their reception. Here follows the order, literally translated, which must have emanated from Bazaine for his own motives:—

"GENERAL,—Be kind enough to order that the eagles of the infantry regiments of your division be collected to-night in your own quarters. To-morrow morning at seven o'clock they will be transported, under the care of the general commanding the artillery in a closed waggon under the escort of an officer and *maréchaux des logis* of the artillery, to the arsenal of Metz. They are to be in their cases, and you are to inform the commanding officers of corps that these eagles will BE BURNT at the arsenal.

"The director of the establishment will receive them, and give receipts to the corps.

"For Marshal of France commanding 6th Corps-d'Armée.

"*By order,*

"The General Chief of his Staff,

"HENRY."

This promise, insists General De Bisson, was a new and deliberate lie.

"The eagles were *not burnt*, but actually delivered over to the enemy as the last trophy of our shame.

"The General Commanding the 2d Division
of 6th Corps d'Armée (Canrobert),

"DE BISSON."

It seems impossible, or nearly so, to get over the above evidence; and if there is a quality in all those noble ones adorning a soldier, it is *truth*, pure and unspotted as his honour. In the mental and bodily suffering of many Frenchmen at the capitulation, it is natural that the above accusation should be levelled against Bazaine, in addition to those of not doing his best to win the battle of Gravelotte, (or at least of incapacity), and again of his impotent attempts to get out of Metz, and his capitulation before reduced to the last extremity.

With regard to the above burning of the eagles, Article 3 of the capitulation between the Prince and

Bazaine states: "The arms and all materiel of the army, consisting of colours, eagles, cannons, mitrailleuses, horses, equipages of the army, munitions of war, will be left at Metz and in the forts to the commission instituted by Marshal Bazaine, to be handed over immediately to the Prussian commissaries."

EXTRACT FROM CONDITIONS OF CAPITULATION.

"The troops without arms will be conducted by regimental corps and in military formation to the places which are indicated for each. The officers will then enter freely into the interior of the entrenched camp or Metz, under their parole not to quit the place without permission of the Prussian commandant.

"The troops will then be conducted by the non-commissioned officers to their bivouacs; the men will keep possession of their knapsacks, their effects, and camp utensils.

"Article No. 4 gives, as in the capitulation of Sedan, leave to all officers who will give their parole in writing not to take up arms during the war, nor act in any way against German interest, to go free, retaining their arms and effects, and not becoming prisoners (the opinion and concluding remarks of the Conseil d'Enquête on the capitulation of Sedan, presided over by Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers, is here called to the notice of the reader); however, on account of the courage and devotion shown by the French army

during this campaign of Metz, this permission to those officers who prefer *not* to give their parole but *go into captivity*, is hereby accorded also by the King himself.

"No. 5 prescribes that all medical officers without exception shall remain with the sick and wounded according to the Geneva convention.

"No. 7. That all articles presenting any doubt will be interpreted in favour of the French army.

(Signed) "JARRAS-STIEHLE."

The following is the verbal communication made to the officers by their chiefs, October 19, 1870, and immediately reduced to writing and the contents sworn to by them :—

"GENTLEMEN,—I am charged by the general of division on the part of the Marshal commanding-in-chief to explain to you the events of importance of the last few days. The provisions in Metz diminishing more and more, Marshal Bazaine deems it necessary to enter into parley with the enemy. He has sent off General Boyer (his first aide-de-camp), who has gone to the head-quarters of King William at Versailles. The gladness with which the messenger of the Marshal has been received proves that the Prussians are very desirous to terminate the war. As General Boyer travelled from Metz to Chateau

Thierry, the service of the trains was suspended for a while to enable him to arrive sooner; there a carriage with the King's arms was in waiting to convey him to Versailles. Almost directly an audience was granted, and he found himself before the council of war, at which assisted, under the presidency of the King, the principal chiefs of the Prussian army. General Boyer having explained the object of his mission, M. de Moltke next spoke. He declared that with questions altogether military there could not be a long discussion. The Army of Metz must submit to the same lot as that of Sedan, and become prisoners of war. M. de Bismarck thought that the political question should be the first to consider, and he should feel disposed to allow a convention which permitted the Army of Metz to retire to some point on French territory hereafter designated in order to bring about the deliberations for peace. This idea was suggested by M. de Bismarck on account of difficulties which arose for the Prussian government to treat, when no government existed in France.

"In fact, all along the route the general learnt from the station-masters and others, who were worthy of reporting, *that without doubt the most complete anarchy existed in France.* Paris invested, and *starving* (October 16th?), cut off from all communication, must yield to the Prussians in a few days. She was paralysed by discord; M. de Keratry and M. Gambetta

were both gone off in a balloon. One had alighted at Amiens, the other at Bar-le-Duc. The South of France had arrived at the summit of disorder. *The red flag floated over Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux.* An army of volunteers (*Garibaldi's?*) *had been destroyed at Orleans. Normandy, overrun by bands of brigands, had had to call in the assistance of the Prussians.* Havre, Elbeuf, and Rouen had actually Prussian garrisons, which, *with the National Guard, kept order.* A religious movement had taken place at La Vendée. *The North desired peace!!*

"Prussia had demanded Lorraine and Alsace, and an immense war indemnity, and Italy, Savoy, Nice, and Corsica. On account of this anarchy, the provisional government being at an end, the different towns not having agreed, as to the new form of government, presented to the Prussians, who wanted to treat of peace, new difficulties. It could only do this by making negotiations with the government of France existing before the 1st September, the Regency! It did not know under the present circumstances whether the Regency would listen to it. In case of refusal it could only address the Chamber of Deputies, the legal representatives of the people. *In order that this assembly could meet and deliberate it must be protected by a French army,** and doubtless would be the *rôle* the French army would have to

* This seemed the goal of Bazaine.

play! In waiting for the return of General Boyer, who had again departed furnished with new powers, it was necessary to make known to the French army that the unfortunate position in which it found itself *would only be transitory*. The army separates its cause from the town and fortress of Metz (after having consumed its, the town's, provisions!) in order to play another part in the cause of its country, and would know how to support yet more privations."

It concludes by offering to answer any new questions, *but all discussion was forbidden.*

This speech, listened to in profound silence, ended the meeting.

The reader can hardly fail to regard the preceding communication of Bazaine as thoroughly Imperial, and nothing else.

"*Ça va sans dire*," and most of the press articles were alike in its condemnation. For example:—

"As the above allocution needs no commentary, the solution indicated has been brought about by faults, the responsibility for which rests we know on whom. The French army is to become the Imperial army, and is to render itself again illustrious by its exploits in the streets. It will act in concert with the Prussian army in re-establishing order, and shooting down those odious Republicans who have the foolish idea of dying for their country.

"Will the army lend itself to this shameful act? Will it, as in 1851, play the game of the Empire, and give its hands to pull the chestnuts out of the fire? We do not believe it! It knows well to-day the ties which attach it to the people, and one will have to veil its eyes to show France in anarchy, and the great towns crying out for Prussian garrisons. The army will believe it not!

"The army is the people; the people do not shoot each other down!

"Away illusions! *There has been enough lying!* The French army has been sold and betrayed, but not dishonoured! It has yet enough glory to prevent it wishing for that, derived from a war in the streets."

It would seem to have been very imprudent to draw such a picture as the above, which was quite untruthful. There must, however, have been some great object in so doing, which must be judged of by the reader. M. de Boyer of course denies that the town capitulated, except by famine, but if so, why should all the above misfortunes have been represented to the army before the provisions had become expended? The evidence seems against the Marshal. M. Dubois, Chef d'escadron d'Artillerie, writes as follows on reading M. de Boyer's denial;—"The Army of the Rhine in its entirety, has been a stranger to the shameful machinations, of which M. de Boyer,

Bazaine's aide, has been the agent, and has led to the sad result of which the world now knows. If it had been allowed to give its sentiments, thousands and thousands of voices would have been raised against this impudent idea!

"If this army had been once consulted, to choose between Gambetta, who devotes himself for the salvation of his country, and the men who have betrayed it, its judgment would have been pronounced. My feeble voice cannot add much to the opinion of history, and if I speak, it is because I cannot stem the indignation which fills my soul. M. de Boyer speaks of duty, but had he consulted the people, it would have been with the opposite effect—the preservation of Metz to France."

In spite of all these propositions of Bazaine to save, as he said, the country from disruption, and for the return of the Napoleon government, the Prussians would not meet his views, and refused the capitulation except on nearly even terms with those accorded to Sedan. On account, however, of the great heroism displayed, not so much at Metz—where, however, the men fought well—but at the two great battles of Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte, Article 4 accorded permission (as before stated) to those officers who declined to give their honour *not to engage in further fighting* (by far the greatest number) to retain their swords. The statement also of Bazaine in Can-

robert's order, "that the eagles were to be burnt at the arsenal," must be also remembered, it being quite devoid of all truth. It also must strike the reader that the communication to the officers was in some respects flippant, as, for instance, a carriage with the royal arms to carry M. de Boyer, the envoy, —*a mere matter of form*—also "that the Prussians were so anxious for peace." They did not seem to have much anxiety, considering that all Bazaine's requests were refused, except unconditional surrender; for the swords of the officers were granted expressly by the heroic old King!

It will be better now, *per contra*, to lay before the readers of history the general and farewell order of the Marshal (No. 12):—

"Vanquished by famine, we are compelled to submit to the laws of war in constituting ourselves prisoners. At different epochs of our military history, brave troops, commanded by Masséna, Kleber, and Gouvion St. Cyr have experienced the same lot, which detracts not from military honour, when, like you, they have so gloriously performed their duty to the extreme of human endurance. Everything that it was possible to do loyally, to avoid this end, has been attempted, and without success.

"As far as regards making a new attempt to break through the fortified lines of the enemy, in spite of

your valour, and the sacrifice of thousands who may yet be of service to their country's cause, it would be fruitless, on account of the armament, and the crushing forces which guard and support these lines. A great disaster would be the consequence.

"Let us prove worthy in our adversity. Let us respect the honourable conventions which have been accorded, if we would be respected as we merit to be. Let us avoid especially, for the reputation of this army, acts which show a want of discipline, as the destruction of arms and materials, because, after military usage, *the fortress and armament* should be returned to France when Peace shall be signed. (A promise?)

"In quitting the command, I wish to express to the generals, officers, and soldiers my gratitude for their loyal co-operation, their brilliant valour in the fighting, their resignation during privations, and it is with a crushed heart I separate myself from you.

"Marshal of France Commanding-in-Chief.

"BAZAINE."

The reader will no doubt observe that the Marshal softens matters as much as possible, for at the time he was perfectly aware of the fury of many of the officers against his action, and a denial that the last moment for submission had arrived. The pamphlet's

circulation is excused by the officers on these grounds (as known to be against military discipline). It is also to be remarked that Bazaine, being in a measure illiterate, must have been very ignorant of the previous history of his own country and that of Germany to nearly *promise* to the garrison the return of one of those fortresses on the border of Germany, claimed of right by the Fatherland, and which is now considered by Field-Marshal von Moltke as one of the three places in Europe impregnable.

Let us now read the rules for capitulation.

Decree as to Capitulations.

Although the decree of May 1, 1812, Article 1, allows a capitulation to be made, if the daily rations have been *properly regulated,* and are expended at last, also if the garrison having sustained an assault in the enceinte, has not the power to sustain another, and if the commander is satisfied that all obligations on his part have been carried out, in which case *the officer will not separate his lot from that of the soldier* (the 3d corps had as much food as *all* the other corps), yet "*en rase campaign.*"* A capitulation is absolutely prohibited to be treated for, either in writing or verbally; and Article 2 is yet still more explicit. Every capitulation "*en rase campaign*"

* In the open country.

having for result to deposit the arms is declared dishonourable, and criminal, and will be punished by death. It will also be so with every other capitulation where the general has not done everything as ordered in the cause of duty and honour. In conclusion, the commandant must have rigorously fulfilled all conditions, but the commandant of troops "*en rase campaign*" *can never capitulate!!!*

CHAPTER XVII.

Accusation of Bazaine by his Officers—Evidence of "Daily News" Correspondent—Surgeon-General's Reports.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY MANY OFFICERS (SOME OF RANK) IN PAMPHLET TO BAZAINE.

"WHY, on the 26th of August, having massed on a single route your army in front of Fort St. Julien, have you not fought a great battle, having only given as an excuse the bad weather? Was the rain not also against the action of the Germans?

"You knew this perfectly well. You could not be ignorant that the army of McMahon was to approach by the north, and it is thought you might have succeeded in giving him the hand. The enemy had not at this time those terrible batteries of position which commenced to hem us in a few days later.

"Why, on the 31st August, have you not pursued even at night the advantages that the army had obtained, nor retained the positions that it had conquered at the price of its blood?

(Of course this might be asked of any defeated force!)

"Why since that time have you not reassembled and concentrated on one given point, your artillery, and all your force, to make a breach through the enemy's lines? If you had done as a bull does when irritated, and launches himself forward with his lowered horns, you would have broken through. Why, after having taken Les Maxes, have you not occupied it till its immense supply of provisions were brought into Metz? in place of which you retired after having carried off a few sacks of grain and bundles of straw for your staff. The Prussians then returned during the night, and set on fire what we have all seen; not a single house has been spared. And now it is roughly announced to us from day to day that there is nothing remaining; nothing to support the horses. Is this careless? Is it want of foresight? Is it anything else? After our horses come the men, yet you still wait! What has General Bourbaki been about? Where is he gone? What is become of him?

"These are not all the questions.

"Why, on the 7th October, did you commence a great action in the plain of Thionville? What object had you in so doing? To reprovision, say some! Then have you not, just as usual, engaged in battle with a great numerical inferiority? You have with

very few guns opposed the numerous batteries of the enemy. And yet had you massed all your artillery on the point of attack, as the Prussians should have by this time taught you, certainly you would have silenced their guns. In place of attacking with some regiments, you should have attacked with a corps-d'armée, or even with two. In spite of all this, the troops by their consummate bravery got possession of Les Grand Tapes, where large granaries of provisions were found; but you did not wish for success, it would seem, for after having at the price of the blood of more than 1000 men obtained this, the retreat was ordered. I myself have seen this thing, and I declare it infamous. What is the meaning of these councils of war which you hold with commanders of corps-d'armée and generals? It is said that during one of them you have discussed the question of capitulation! Is it true? One is inclined to give credence to it, because even this very day one who is in a position near you, replied to an affirmation of an officer of the Garde Mobile, who stated at the Café Parisien that it had been voted unanimously, '*You are deceived, monsieur;* one-third only voted for it!'

"Finally, here is the most serious of the questions to be answered:

"Why have you not tired out by harassing, *every day, every hour*, the blockading army by sorties in

force on a given point? This was easy for you, because, occupying the *centre* * of the circle of investment, you could every day, nay, every hour even, without having any grand or decisive success, at least have submitted the besiegers to such losses, as little by little would have exhausted and demoralised them, and at the very least you would surely have got fresh supplies, at the expense of the enemy, to continue the struggle! You have done nothing; and in a few days from now you will have no more means of resistance. In spite of that, count not on us, you shall not sell us like a flock of sheep—you and your acolytes. You shall one day be judged! God grant that you may be able to defend yourself!

"ONE OFFICER SPEAKING
FOR THE MANY.

"METZ, *October* 12, 1870."

The two engineer officers arrested on account of the pamphlet, and the general expression of non-confidence and dissatisfaction as explained before, were Captains Boyenval and Rossel. The former, who expressed himself very openly on the situation, and with dignity, was conducted by the gendarmes

* This same remark was made by a German general of the war to me, who was of opinion that they would never have been kept in by French under same circumstances.

into Fort St. Quentin as a close prisoner under sentry view (unmentioned in Bazaine's despatches).

The testimony as to above having occurred, is that of M. de Valcourt, an officer attached to the head-quarters of the Army of the Rhine, and who has reported on the whole question of capitulation in a military and also in a political point of view.

The last question put to Bazaine, as the accusers say, is the most serious, because it takes in both honour and capacity, or the reverse; and certainly the question is most crucial, and proves the knowledge of the art of war on the accusing officer's part, for referring to receive opinions on this head, it seems as follows, viz.: Although it used to be considered that three times the number of men were required to blockade a force like Bazaine's, it is now considered that double is sufficient, which the Germans had not. The besieged army's duty is clearly to endeavour to prevent the blockade from being thoroughly accomplished, which, as has been already stated, could have been done by the besieged army's central position, that is, by a series of smaller battles at the commencement, holding the ground gained in each of these till the enemy attacks in great force, and then repeating the same on another point of the investment.

Again, if besides the garrison there is an effective field force, in that case a very large investing force

is necessary. According to the above, Bazaine, it is suggested, might have pierced the Germans and gained the open, leaving his garrison in Metz, or he might have effectually prevented the closing of the blockading lines. He only attempted one serious sortie, and he did not even follow that up, nor even re-provision. His apparent object in selecting Thionville and the plateau of St. Barbe has been already given; but there seems no doubt that he would have been obliged to fight again in that direction if he had got out.

It will be remembered that a breaking through made in the direction of the east or south-east was, if pressed with great vigour, to be allowed to succeed; this was the German order on closing the lines of investment, and it seems the most likely to have succeeded.

The last accusing question of the officers in Metz therefore must be read with the above military and strategic opinions, and all these particulars are put before the reader for his consideration, because what one is trying to arrive at is:—

(1.) With another and undoubtedly capable and resolute general, like, for instance, Pelissier, or a Napier, would not more have been done to combat the success of the Germans? and would the blockade and capitulation of, say 140,000 fighting men, have ever been effected?

(2.) Would another Napoleon I. have entered Metz at all, with his whole army, after the battle of Gravelotte, so severe to Germans, and as a moderate garrison could have held Metz for some time without the risk of a famine?

The occupation of fortresses for the safety of armies has been frequently discussed and various opinions held; and the day has nearly arrived for the solution of the question. The partizans for the fortresses say that armies have been thus saved. History does not altogether support this. A few instances may be mentioned.

After the battles of Cannæ and Thrasymene, gained by Hannibal, the Roman armies failed to rally, although in the neighbourhood of strong places, and the capital not very distant; some cowards just managed to reach Rome. Defeated at Zama, at the Gates of Carthage, the army of Hannibal could not rally and continue the war. Mélas after Marengo was close to Alexandria, Tortone, Genoa, Turin, Fenestrelle, Coni, and these could not save him. The capitulation of Mack at discretion with 30,000 men is again evidence against fortresses. Beaten at Jena, the Prussians could not get the necessary succour from their strong places. One must not, however, it would seem, consider these useless, for Napoleon I. has in his Memoirs said—"Fortresses are useful for a defensive and for an

offensive war. Doubtless they are not able to supply alone the place of an army, but they are the only means which one has to retard, weaken, and keep a conquering army in a state of anxiety."

A French writer brings prominently forward the practice in France of late years of making engineer officers attend more to building and architecture than to strategy, and the study for the attack and defence of fortresses. He also shows that the bombardment of all the fortified places in France during the war, except Belfort and Strasbourg, only gives a loss of 721 men killed, or two men a day, Paris included.

The evidence of the correspondent of the *Daily News*, present at the capitulation, and who was the most rapidly informed during the siege, is so remarkable a document, that it is here given. He says, speaking of the capitulation:—"The chief of the staff of the German army quitted Frascati discouraged; hardly hoping that any conclusion would be arrived at. The French seemed obstinate and intractable; I felt, however, convinced that the capitulation would come before long. At noon Bazaine sent an autograph letter to Prince Frederick Charles demanding a new conference. The Germans, therefore, again sent General Stiehle to Frascati, as also Count Wartensleben.

"The interview lasted three hours, and was very

stormy on the part of the French commissioners, but it ended in their consenting to the German demands, and the one 'that the officers should retain their swords,' was accorded by the King by telegram only at 3 in the morning. The conference continued till 8 A.M., when the capitulation was signed, comprising the cession of Metz, of all the fortifications, armaments, provisions, munitions, as at Sedan, of all the garrison and army of Bazaine, composed of 3 marshals of France, 66? (71) generals, 6000 officers, and 173,000 soldiers. *The Germans were astonished.* An army and a fortress of the first order had surrendered to a besieging army only a little more numerous."

(The reader will doubtless also be surprised, after what has been said regarding the strength of an army of investment in the opinion of military authorities.)

"On the 28th the mines were withdrawn by Major Sandkull, chief engineer, in order to allow the 7th corps to enter in perfect security, and remain on guard with the prisoners, while the rest of the 1st Army immediately commenced its march towards Paris. Prince Frederick Charles ordered his headquarters to be at Lyons. The French did not deliver up their arms so early by twenty-four hours as had been agreed, owing to internal disturbances. At 4 P.M. the different guards of the French were replaced

by Prussian; two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry having entered the town, General von Zastrow, commanding 7th corps, took possession of the government of this, and the fortress. The tragedy is nearly terminated, but it remains to describe the most painful part of all.

"After the declaration of Von Zastrow, who occupied the Bois-de-Vaux on the morning of 19th of August, Bazaine could have avoided being driven into Metz. When he found himself in Metz, he could, according to the reports, have pierced an opening and rejoined McMahon much more easily than McMahon could have joined him. After the army had consumed the greater part of the cavalry and artillery and other horses, this was necessarily more difficult, but it is affirmed, nevertheless, that in his movements he failed in resolution, and even his two last sorties were frivolous (*sic*). These facts are attributed to a plot, as before stated, with the Regency, so that his army should rest inactive till the conclusion of the war in the west of France, and then be placed at the disposal of the Imperial dynasty with the consent of the Prussians, Bazaine himself expecting in this case to be Governor of the Prince Imperial, and perhaps Regent. Nearly all in Metz believe this, and among them many persons of influence have confessed this to me.

"During the whole of the investment Bazaine has

seldom or ever been seen in the camp, except on extraordinary occasions. *Never* in the ambulances in the Place Royale (where the statue of the *intrepid Ney* would have stood before him, fighting as a private soldier). Never elsewhere in the town. The civil authorities had to go and find him at Ban St. Martin. He would not come to the Hotel de Ville even once. He has scarcely ever said a word of encouragement to the troops. Canrobert sometimes did this, and exhorted them to be patient, and then the men shouted 'Vive Canrobert!' 'Down with Bazaine!' Towards the close, fearing to be assassinated, he was afraid to show himself to his men at all, and a terrible laxness of discipline has been brought about by this hated capitulation, while there *yet remained a week's rations for all.* On the morning of the 29th October five dead soldiers were exhibited at Montigny, while the staff still had luxurious meals; and on the same morning, the 29th, four days' rations were distributed to the entire army, who had not had any during the two preceding days. During eight days one had not been able to get either beef or pork at any price, but on the morning of this 29th, *when nothing whatever had arrived* for the town, the shops had got quantities. This is cited as a proof in the town, that speculators had nursed up their provisions, and that if a proper system and control of the rations had been carried out and combined with urgent requisi-

tions, there would have been no waste, and the fortress could have held out for a month longer. The staff fed their horses in the beginning on bread, but of late the prices had attained the following scale:—Sugar, 30 francs per pound; salt, 15 francs; a ham, 300 francs; a potato, 45 centimes; an onion, 60; and a little pig caught outside the enceinte was sold for 748 francs.

"During five weeks all the amputations in the place had been done without chloroform or ether, and the wounds not dressed antiseptically.* Nearly 19,000 sick and wounded (military?), and 35,000 have died at Metz during the siege, generally for want of care and from putrefaction in the hospitals. Not to have had sufficiency for seventy-four days amounted to a crime. The reigning epidemics are small-pox, black typhus (called years ago in Dublin the 'black death'), and dysentery. There has been no scurvy, although the horseflesh and soup had to be eaten without salt. The discovery of a supposed saline spring at St. Julien was only a sham, practised by throwing some salt into the water to encourage the army.

"When the capitulation became known, the population was furious. The Garde Nationale refused to give up their arms, and in the afternoon of the 29th

* The plan of Sir Joseph Lister, Bart., and known abroad as the "Pansement Lysterien."

a captain of dragoons appeared at the head of a detachment, who swore to die rather than yield, while Albert Collignon, editor of a daily journal (*Journal de Metz*), mounted on a white horse, firing off his pistols, exhorted those who surrounded him to endeavour to make a sortie either for death or victory, and to escape the shame which awaited them. He was followed by a lady singing the Marseillaise, which produced great excitement. The doors of the cathedral were battered in, and the tocsin and funeral dirge sounded all night. On General Coffinières arriving to quiet the crowd, two pistol shots were fired at him. Finally, aided by two regiments of the line, he dispersed the crowd, but all night, terror, indignation, and grief, showed themselves everywhere; respectable women ran through the streets tearing their hair, throwing their hats and laces on the ground, and treading them underfoot, and crying half madly, 'What will become of our children?' Soldiers, some drunk, some shouting, passed in irregular parties without caps, their sabres broken, weeping and sobbing like children. 'Poor Metz!' they groaned, '*till now* the proudest of towns! What misfortune! What dreadful catastrophe! We have been sold! All is lost! All is over for France!' The civil functionaries called out in the streets, 'Who will be our master? Who will govern us? Where shall we hide our-

selves to avoid seeing the overwhelming ruin of our country?'

"Yesterday I remained closeted with the mayor and council, who kept me because I was the first foreigner who entered the town. The agitation, the anxiety, and terror of these poor people were crushing. 'What will the Prussians do?' cried they. 'How shall we receive them?' They asked if their guards would eat up their little supply of food, and would they have to submit themselves to ill treatment if they could not furnish their demands? They were immediately quieted on learning that already 1000 waggons of food were coming from Courcelles, and that provisions were already waiting conveyance from London to meet their wants in reply to the appeals made by the mayors of Briey and other Communes, published in the English and American journals a month before. The besieging army has yesterday given up *the whole of its rations of bread for the nourishment of the French prisoners.* This act has much affected the population of Metz, and has considerably assisted in allaying their fears.

"To-day an inspector of the railway has travelled between Ars and Union. The way is now open between Saarbruck, Metz, and Nancy, and not much damaged. There were very few German prisoners in Metz; the French would not hold them beyond the time that they could send them off. I saw on

leaving Metz satisfaction on the faces of all the Germans, while grief was depicted on the faces of all the French officers and men, and even if the latter were half drunk (a very rare occurrence), or else a defiant haughtiness. This, however, was also rare, and was for the most part on the faces of the young. I am informed that the real losses of French from the 18th of August by disease and fighting is put down at 42,000. Bazaine refused the chivalrous offer of the Prince to allow the soldiers to depose their arms outside the fortifications, in presence of their conquerors, in place of in the Arsenal,* as he could not guarantee their good conduct. The Guard alone had by its discipline merited being reviewed with its arms. Till the last moment it was hoped that Bourbaki would arrive from Lille with his army, but after some weeks the soldiers got rid of that illusion as they got the best news from the German "*avant-postes.*" Of their demoralisation, caused partly by hunger, the officers openly complained with much bitterness. Yesterday afternoon, at 4 P.M., Bazaine crossed at Ars, on the way to Wilhelmshöhe, in a close carriage engraved with his monogram, and escorted by many officers of his staff on horseback. The women of the village

* In 1860, at the capitulation of Capua, in Italy, 14,000 Neapolitan soldiers were also allowed by King Victor Emmanuel to deposit their arms outside the fortifications before General Milwitz (November 1860), who had been deputed by General Garibaldi to receive them.—H. B. F.

had learnt of his coming, and were there shouting, 'Traitor! Coward! Brigand! Robber! Where are our husbands whom thou hast betrayed? Give us back our children whom thou hast sold!' They attacked the carriage, smashed the windows, and would have torn Bazaine in pieces had it not been for the intervention of the Prussian gendarmes.

"All over the country the impression is that France exists no longer. It is thought that Paris will not resist as well as Metz; at all events all reflecting persons consider that that city must be taken to finish the war."

A French officer of rank denies the description of the ladies in Metz tearing their hair in the streets!

The consideration of the following is required, as it increased Bazaine's difficulty :—

REPORT OF THE SURGEON-GENERAL IN CHIEF OF AMBULANCES AND HOSPITALS IN METZ.

"*To Marshal Bazaine.*

"*September* 24, 1870.

"I had the honour to address to the general of division, commandant of the fortress, a report re-

* This description is translated from French records, not taken from the *Daily News* itself.

garding the sanitary state of our hospitals and ambulances, and questions foreign to the despatch of your excellency of the same date. A slight improvement in the sanitary state has taken place as regards the gravity of the diseases.

"Typhoid, which remains pretty general everywhere, brings the greatest mortality.

"The fever cases are in the artillery depôts, separated as far as possible from the wounded.

"There exist a good many cases of dysentery, which are easily brought down to a state of diarrhœa, and which I think is partly due to the absence of all salt in the rations, and may easily find an explanation by physiology.

"The rarity of certain articles makes us fear a none the less serious malady, scurvy, from the absence in the blood of a chemical agent which contributes to its plasticity, and some cases have already occurred in camp. Many cases of amputation prove fatal daily, on account of typhoid and diarrhœal complications. Such is the unfortunate effect of having in the same buildings wounded and fever, in spite of our efforts to separate them as much as possible. The mortality, which was, as I said, diminishing a little, has augmented during the last three days. Gangrene diminishes, of course, according to the number of wounded, who on dying leave many beds daily vacant.

"Many tents are also becoming affected. I have struck as many as possible, and the soil has become a little more healthy. At my request, a layer of tan has been spread in the spaces occupied by the tents, but this space is too closely occupied, but to move them would be of great utility. Those sick in the buildings and in the tents complain greatly of cold. (September 24.) I have applied for a third blanket, and hope it will soon be forthcoming.

"Continuing my report, Monsieur le Maréchal, the entries to hospitals do not decrease, but augment; the mortality oscillates. We are favoured with fine weather, which allows of more free ventilation. If the cold augments, and we have to close the windows, the situation will become more complicated, and we have to fear greater misfortunes. There is a good deal of sickness through the town, and diarrhœa particularly. The situation does not inspire me with anxiety, but this will arise, if typhus (or cholera), already slight, should increase.

"I think, Monsieur le Maréchal, that I may dispense with sending you the actual lists with this report. They would only be a numerical placing before you of what your eyes must have every day seen. (This looks as if he did go about.)

"If some thousands of sick could be transported from here it would be assuredly beneficial; but in the actual state of the present, I see nothing for very

great anxiety. We could, and ought to hope for a better state, but we have to fear a worse.

(Signed) "GRELLOIRS."

REPORT OF SURGEON-GENERAL CUVEILLIER OF TROOPS OUTSIDE METZ.

"*To Le Maréchal Bazaine.*

"BAN ST. MARTIN, *24th September* 1870.

"From all the documents furnished by the various surgeons, I have no hesitation in stating the sanitary state of the troops outside Metz is not satisfactory.

"Dysentery and typhoid are rife, the numbers are heavy in Metz, in spite of the temporary hospitals and ambulances outside the fortress. In Metz itself purulent infection has carried off great numbers among the wounded. Scurvy and dysentery have appeared, and we fear an epidemic which must arrive soon by the crowding of the sick.

"To-day our numbers in and out of Metz are 14,298, our deaths are 70 per day, and are extending, from the wounded to the sick generally. There being no salt in the bread, renders this difficult of digestion, and the change in the rations will provoke ills of the stomach and bowels.

"The surgeons of the 4th corps consider that although the fevers are approaching typhus in character, they are not entirely pronounced as such yet.

"It is on account of the gravity of the situation that I have the honour to propose to your Excellence the evacuation of the village of Plappeville, to place there 2000 sick, and thus to try and put off the period of an epidemic, by isolating them more, and to ameliorate the Metz hospitals, and separate the sick of the city from those of the camps.

"If an epidemic should declare itself, one of these places would probably escape the infection.

"As Monsieur le Maréchal has, owing to the defence of Metz, wished to give the ambulances and temporary hospitals more considerable scope, and to occupy the railway station of Montigny, which is in course of execution, I think that this will be sufficient for the moment, because we have at present no rainy or bad weather.

"Finally, when some of our camps shall again become more healthy, like Ban St. Martin, the corridors of Fort Moselle, and others (the preceding conditions only augmenting sickness, because there is not enough to support the body, on the rations during sickness, and against such deleterious conditions), I hope we shall not forget Plappeville. The surgeons of the corps inform me that the indications I have given them are punctually carried out.

"The conditions therefore at present, Monsieur le Maréchal, are not favourable, and threaten to become worse. I have no further propositions to make to

your Excellency, because to do so under existing circumstances, and get them carried out, would be an impossibility.

"Surgeon-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine *par interim*,

(Signed) "CUVEILLIER."

Note.—Even chloroform had run short, and it will therefore be seen that the appliances and supplies necessary for the sick of the army had not been sufficient for *one month, August* 19 *to September* 24.

The above report seems reasonable, and not like many which are calculated to increase the General's difficulties.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Evidence of M. de Valecourt, staff-officer and deputy—Military and political—Accusations against the Governor of Metz, General Coffinières—His replies—Petition to Mayor of Metz, and of officers, 41st, to Bazaine—Small sorties of 27th September, 2d October, and 7th October described by officers.

The Report of M. de Valecourt, Staff-Officer, attached to Head-Quarters of the Army of the Rhine.

The above may be considered as a military question, and a political one. The former is the one with which we have chiefly to deal; the latter resembles in a great measure in its aspect what has been already brought forward in accusation of the Marshal, "That for his own ambitious reasons he endeavoured to hold his army intact, thus to become the arbiter of, and the temporary ruler of the country, and so support the Imperial family, to whom he owed his high position." For some time past no serious sortie had taken place, to indicate that the commander-in-chief wished to draw his army out of the terrible position

into which he had brought it. He took no precautions against a blockade of long duration. This we are going to consider, describing the conduct of the Marshal since the capitulation of Sedan, and the revolution of 4th September.

Simply examining the military situation, the Marshal, we find, made but two real attempts at sortie since 1st September, viz., September 27, at the village of Peltre, with the result of capturing forty head of cattle and two hundred carts of forage (it is not necessary to speak of October 2), and again on October 7 a strategic movement, which had for result the giving more freedom to our movements in the direction of Thionville. A little country house belonging to M. Ladonchamps was taken by assault; and the division of voltigeurs of the Guard advanced three hundred metres further, taking the Villa of St. Remy, and halting by order at the rivulet of Tapes. Two regiments of this division had in fact the order to reach this, remaining there till 5.30 P.M., and to retreat from it at that hour. Hardly 1700 or 1800 men really took part in this engagement, which cannot be put down as a serious attempt to pierce the Prussian lines. Besides, the commander-in-chief seems to have wished to prove to his soldiers the inutility of their efforts. On the 17th October an official notice appeared in the journals of Metz stating the number of German troops investing the

entrenched camp, insisting on the fact that there were three lines of Prussian troops supported by powerful batteries and by numerous reserves. In fact, wishing to set before the eyes of each officer and soldier the impossibility for the Marshal to execute a movement for liberty. Already at the commencement of, and particularly since the 7th October, there were reports of intended capitulation. Every one of courage shrank violently from such a shameful proposition. The journals, in spite of being severely censured, published various protestations, signed by most esteemed officers. The citizens began to cry out, and the word *Treason!* passed from one to another like a train of ignited powder. It occurred to the Marshal to hasten the capitulation, which would be useful to his own projects. The Intendance had never been able to obtain orders for the diminution in the rations of animal food and forage. The horses received this in full regularly, even nearly up to the end of the siege; and with regard to the men's rations, it was only on using almost violent language before the Marshal that he consented to the reductions in them being made. The Intendance has deposed before a Notary Public of Metz minutes of their reports addressed to the Marshal on this subject. It thus has placed itself under shelter from the most grave and serious reproaches levelled at it. The resources of both the town and garrison

had nourished the army for some weeks before the Marshal would consent to diminish the rations from 750 to 700 grammes; and in doing this he gave orders to hide it from the troops, and to use some inferior flour. After some days more the Intendance applied for further reduction, and the official diminution to 500 grammes was announced. Again, eight days later, 300 grammes of bad bread were allowed. It was, however, cheerfully accepted by the troops, until, on the 19th of October, the suppression of issue of bread took place. Biscuit also was no longer distributed. On this date orders were given for four days' reserve rations of biscuit, and they were directed to consume this from the 19th to 23d. The men had been for a considerable time using this biscuit, which had remained from the campaigns in China (1860) and Italy (1859), and which was in a mouldy state. Salt failed from 15th September. Since 1st September the meat consisted exclusively of horse-flesh, and had been augmented as the bread ration decreased; besides, as during and at the end of the siege, 300 horses died, over and above those which were slaughtered, the men failed not, in order to appease hunger, to use this delcterious meat at the risk of severe sickness.

To finish the harrowing recital of this military portion, Marshal Bazaine did not want for munition of war. The commanding general of artillery

(Soleille) gives in his tables that there were on the 20th September 9,000,000 of Chassepot cartridges, 498 guns in use, furnished with 150,000 rounds. Since the commencement of the campaign, the 2d, 3d, 4th, 6th, and Guard united, had only used $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of cartridges, and only fired 80,000 rounds from cannon. In fact the Marshal had in his possession sufficient munitions for a great sortie which would have in some way decided the fate of his army, and in some degree the destiny of France.

A last fact is more precisely noteworthy. That a decision had been taken for some time past by the Marshal to make the army of the Rhine subservient to his own personal aggrandisement. On the 22d October, General de Cissy of 4th corps-d'armée, learning that the second mission of General Boyer had completely fallen through, and that King William would not accord to the French army any favourable conditions, proposed to Bazaine shortly, a plan of uniting instantly the resources of the town and the army. To requisition the different houses of Metz and its neighbourhood for food, which had not been previously done, then to harness to the guns the most vigorous yet of the horses which the inhabitants could furnish, and after three or four days of preparation to march "*coute que coute*," having in each man's haversack 180 cartridges and four days' rations of smoked horse flesh, coffee, and bread.

This plan, so patriotic, and certainly practicable, was formally thrown out by the Marshal, and given over to his council to escape from responsibility, the opinion of the other marshals, it is alleged, being against the project unanimously.

The short review of the question politically, says M. de Valecourt, is this—

"'The conduct of Marshal Bazaine, so difficult to explain if a man had honest motives, is clear as the day, if his personal interests were consulted by him. Bazaine, essentially ambitious, and even more false, endeavoured from 18th August to make his army play a political *rôle* in France. Thinking that he had this army well in hand, and that the brilliant courage which he spoke of on every occasion would attach it to him more and more, he combined his plans so as to have at his disposition a strongly-constituted body of troops, to make a pressure irresistible, and which could decide the destiny of France. The disaster at Sedan fortified him yet more in this idea; so he took care *in no way to recognise* the National Government, and announced to his army the captivity of the Emperor, and revolution and formation of a new government unworthy, and copied from German papers. In spite of all this an admirably constructed council of defence was got up, to resist what Canrobert, instructed by Bazaine, was endeavouring to gain converts to. 'To enter France,

set up the Prince Imperial, and save the Napoleonic dynasty.' This council of defence had for object to arrest Bazaine himself, Lebœuf, and Froissart, and nominate De L'Admirault to the chief command, but the whole project ultimately fell to the ground. Bazaine in the end wanted to surrender his army without Metz, which was under the command (as the governor) of General Coffinières de Nordeck, but this was refused by the Germans.

"On the 21st October, when the rupture of pourparlers took place, Bazaine for the first time addressed himself to the Government of the National Defence. The address was in cypher, and handed by two officers to the Minister of War, and not understood. Finally it was recognised as written in the Imperial cypher, and only capable of interpretation by the Emperor or those of his former ministry, therefore this must not be taken into consideration at all, and since the 14th September he, the Marshal, seems an unworthy servant, if not a traitor to his country, as he knew and repudiated the Government of the National Defence.

"On the 15th October, General Coffinières recognised the above Government of National Defence, and announced the sudden exhaustion of supplies.

Resumé.

"The conduct of Marshal Bazaine in the two months and a half which have elapsed between the

battle of the 18th August (St. Privat) and now, I rest on the facts heretofore adduced, viz. :—

"(1.) That since the above date the Marshal has never attempted but one serious sortie, and his attacks have only been to serve as excuses before history.

"(2.) That the Marshal would not make a supreme effort which would have tended, even in case of success, to interfere with the organisation of his army, and would not have permitted himself, as commander-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, to have been arbiter of the political destiny of France.

"(3.) This also explains why the Marshal would never recognise the Government of the National Defence, and had endeavoured up to the last to reassemble and reunite the remains of the Buonapartist forces, in hopes of re-establishing a third empire.

"(4.) Once convinced that he could not bring France and the Prussians to this way of thinking, without adding that of the capitulation, and the cession of the town and fortress to the misfortunes, of the country, the Marshal deemed it his duty to *hasten* this surrender.

"(5.) In order to do this he had refused to diminish in time the rations of forage, leaving thus suddenly without them 25,000 cavalry and artillery horses, instead of making last as long as possible the resources which still remained on the 1st September after his great sortie.

"He only consented to diminish rations when doing so could have but made the smallest difference.

"Finally, He only acted with one ulterior object—To be, and remain master of the situation in France; still believing he could make use of the Prussians in his ambitious projects, he delivered up, knowingly, the town and fortress, and army encamped, and entrenched in the enceinte.

"E. DE VALECOURT."

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST GENERAL COFFINIÈRES DE NORDECK.

We now come to the evidence of M. Bouteiller (a friend of Bazaine's, and where he had his headquarters); formerly leader of the majority in the Corps Legislatif, and Member of the Municipal Council of Metz; but it would be useless to give this at length. He asks the following questions concerning the General:—

"(1.) Has he formed—*Yes or No!*—any committee, for administering the supply of provisions since the siege, and informed it of its duties?

"(2.) Has he favoured by all means in his power, the bringing into Metz of provisions from all sides, since the breaking out of the war? *Yes or No!*

"(3.) Has he allowed the bakeries to issue a greater supply than necessary to the camps, and permitted any waste of provisions?

"(4.) Has he not left the municipal council in ignorance of the true state of affairs until 13th October, when he announced the entire failure of the provisions of the army, and required the above to then share with it the provisions and living supplies belonging to the town itself?

"(5.) Has he not got on his conscience that he made attempts to intimidate the population by announcing in one case the expected bombardment of the city by a terrible *battery of Armstrong guns*, which did not in fact exist, and also a general bombardment which would follow on the departure of the army itself—a departure which we all wished for, and he knows how accomplished, and when the population had not, during a whole month, complained, although suffering from fever, small-pox, dysentery, and other diseases, and a great mortality among the children?"

REPLIES OF GENERAL COFFINIÈRES DE NORDECK.

"(1.) M. de Bouteiller mistakes a Committee of Provisions' duties. It is to look after the quality, not to regulate the issue, and is to be appointed by the general-in-chief alone; and on account of this excep-

tional case was not so appointed. Afterwards, when things had assumed a more stable state than at the beginning, I myself appointed a committee.

"(2.) The authorities (civil) are in the first place charged with bringing in the supplies by Article 245 of decree.

"(3.) The charging me with not protecting and preventing the robbing of the bakeries is curious on the part of M. de Bouteiller, as he above others ought to know that I have had 200 gendarmes in Metz on this duty, as the reports of the gendarmerie will prove.

"(4.) With regard to not informing the people that we were running short, he forgets that the many arrests, and the news testifying that they were running short, and to publicly announce this by placards would be to let the Prussians know through their many spies that we only had supplies for fifteen days, and the army for seven days. I *did* inform the mayor, and took measures in conjunction with the magistrates. I was in communication with M. Bonchotte of the great mills, and never told him in any way to make a secret of the situation, and the attacks on the bakeries were sufficient to show any one with any vision the real state of affairs.

"(5.) I never stated anything regarding a bombardment by an Armstrong battery; and, moreover, had the army quitted Metz, every intelligent person must

have known that there would have been a bombardment.

M. de Bouteiller also says that the National Guard dreamed of having another general in the place of Bazaine. I have heard of this, but I never heard of the proposal to replace myself by a colonel of engineers, and that it wanted to have at the head General Changarnier; this has, however, much surprised me, because the Guard is Imperialist, whereas the general is not a hot partisan of the Regency.

"COFFINIÈRES DE NORDECK."

The above replies seem to be very worthy of consideration, and the reader, at all events the military ones, should also not forget the fact that the accusation of M. de Bouteiller "that Coffinières intimidated the population by the threat concerning *Armstrong* batteries" must totally fall to the ground, because no such batteries have ever existed in any of the German armies. *Krupp* is their man! *Armstrong* is ours!

The general finally adds that when he saw Bazaine, on 10th October, believed that the army was about departing, he took his measures in consequence and separated the interests of the army and town, also made requisitions on certain houses and appointed councils. On the 25th October, when all negotiations ceased, the Marshal forced him to confound

the above two interests. He says: "I demanded a written order, and had to obey it, as the situation was totally changed. I cannot understand an officer refusing to obey his superior, and in this case such an act of disobedience would have been quite futile, as the provisions failed."—C. DE N.

CONCLUDING DECLARATION OF GENERAL COFFINIÈRES.

"On every occasion I have declared that the city and fortress should have distinct interests from that of the army, that all political matters should be suppressed, and everything sacrificed to the defence. After the most violent discussions, and having twice given in my resignation, I have only ceded before the council of war, and the exhaustion of our provisions, and the formal order of the commander-in-chief. Metz, which under ordinary circumstances had sufficient for 100,000 people, has nourished over 200,000 people for two and a half months.

"GENERAL COFFINIÈRES DE NORDECK."

PETITION OF THE PEOPLE TO THE MAYOR OF METZ.

In conclusion of this subject it should be mentioned that, setting aside for a moment the question whether or not the provisions had been expended

or wasted at some time during the seige, the probability of this occurring had been presented to the minds of the intelligent part of the population as early as the 27th September, on which date they forwarded a petition to the mayor to be remitted to Marshal Bazaine; and which, after citing the state to which they would soon be reduced by reason of failure of horses, and nourishment, and heavy rains, which would ultimately paralyse any movements of the army and bring diseases more fatal than wounds,

The petition concluded thus:—

"*We therefore believe* that the time for action is come; for want of success is better than inaction; because the moments are counted, and because, without discussing or indicating the military operations, it must be clear to all sensible persons that energetic enterprises conducted with all available force may bring about considerable changes, perhaps decisive results. We shall leave it till a later day to prove how, having closed our eyes, we found that our delays had been fatal to us. Granted our attempts are fraught with peril! but later on will they be less? What succour are we likely to get? Is it politics which mix themselves up with military matters, and these delays? One would think it was at Paris that our fate is to be decided!"

PETITION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE 41ST REGIMENT.

"To Marshal Lebœuf, commanding 3d corps-d'armée à St. Julien.

"QUENLIEN, *October* 28, 1876.

"The undersigned officers of the 41st regiment of the line, although they have not yet received the official communication of a capitulation without conditions (issued at 10 P.M.), nevertheless believe this announcement of disaster imminent. It is their duty to protest most solemnly against the entire surrender of an army which has not yet been vanquished by the enemy. They beg you to count on their co-operation, and if you will make a call on them for an act of devotion and for any energetic action they declare themselves quite ready."

Here followed the signatures of Colonel Taussier and forty-two other officers.

CHAPTER XIX.

Comparison of Attacks of British in Peninsula with those of Bazaine—Royal Telegrams—Remarks concerning the rest of France.

Upon the whole there seem to be some reasons for these protests of officers, men, and civilians, against the inaction of Bazaine; for, granting that there was peril in attacking the German line, and no army to join hands, should it successfully break through, still it would seem that anything would have been preferable to the continued suffering of the population and want of supplies, and some successes must have been obtained, as at Peltre, where he pierced the German lines, and so the siege might at least have been prolonged. Had he only remained a day or two in possession of the right bank of the Moselle, he would have materially ameliorated matters; therefore, information would lead one to suppose that he really did not care to quit Metz entirely. Digressing for a little, perhaps the reader will compare the whole attacks to break through the lines while having a large force at his

disposition, with one or two of our own attacks on fortresses, say during the Peninsular War under Wellington. Let us take two, shortly, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, for instance.*

At the former, the main breach was to be assaulted by Picton's division, composed of Mackinnon's and Campbell's brigade, preceded by a storming party under Major Manners and Lieut.-Colonel O'Toole, with five companies of the old 95th, 83d, and 94th to make a diversion. There were only 300 men for the storming party, led by Major Napier of 52d, followed by Vandeleur's and Barnard's brigades, while Pack made a feint against the southern face of the fort. When near the breach, Campbell made his men lie down to escape the enemy's shells. They got up the rampart, the men falling in heaps and choking the passage, for Mackinnon had not yet arrived; the order for a volley was given, and the men took to the bayonet; Mackinnon's columns now arrived, and swept upwards through the destructive fire, poor Mackinnon and many of his men, however, falling mortally wounded. Napier, with the light division, in the meantime made for the smaller breach; would not wait for the hay bags to pad the ditch, but flew to the glacis, jumped headlong down the scarp, and rushed up the "*fausse braye*," under a storm of grape and musketry, and found the forlorn hope had taken

* Only that we tried to break in, which was more perilous.

too much to the right, so he made straight for the breach. Here the fire was so hot that *all wavered*, and every man snapped his musket. Major Napier's arm was shattered, but he cried out, "Bayonets, men!" All the officers sprang forward with a cheer, and the entrance was won. General Crawford was shot dead on the glacis, and Colborne wounded, and all this took place in a short half hour; but Wellington had said *Ciudad Rodrigo* MUST *be stormed this evening!* How unlike Bazaine! Our loss was 1300 killed and wounded. We took 1500 prisoners and 150 pieces of artillery, for which Wellington was made Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Earl of Wellington, and a grant of £2000 per annum.

He then flew at Badajos, but refused to bombard the place or inflict cruelty.* Here the storming party took the Picurina hill fort in *an hour* with a loss of 54 killed and 250 wounded, with 5 officers.

Picton's fighting and desperate division tried to storm the Castle Leith, the bastion of San Vincente, at ten o'clock, and was repulsed.

* Because he could here act alone; so unlike the part he had to play on 2d September 1807—an attack *without any declaration of war.* On that day England fell upon poor little Denmark with a perfect storm of fire and iron, and in a few hours she was a heap of ruins; women and children without warning perished. Three thousand people met their doom in this massacre under a political name, a blot on England and its two ministers at the time, the Duke of Portland and Mr. Canning. *These* facts should be noted by those who blamed Lord Wolseley for his advice regarding the Channel Tunnel.

The second assault under Colonel Ridge, of the old 5th Fusiliers, was successful, but he fell covered with glory. At the great breach were beams chained together spiked with sword blades. Powder barrels were rolled on our men, and a terrible fire maintained. Here 2000 of our bravest fell, and Wellington had to order them to retire and reform for another assault, when some of Walker's men found a weak point, and broke in through the bastion of San Vincente.

Five thousand men and officers fell during this short siege. In the assault, 3500 men were wounded, with 60 officers, and 700 were killed; 5 generals wounded and 2000 men killed in the breaches, the 43d and 52d losing more men than the seven regiments of the 3d division, and all this frightful carnage took place in a space of less than a hundred yards square.

All these gallant deeds the officers and men were ready and willing to act over again at Metz; but they seem to have been held back by the hand, and orders of the Marshal and others, from some insufficiently explained reason, and which led to the fatal disaster of the 29th October.

There is yet one very serious piece of negligence brought by the Germans against the French during the siege, viz.: "That when they had succeeded in taking Noisseville and Montoy, and so piercing both

sides of the Saarlouis' road, they never spiked a single gun which they had captured, just as they had several times neglected to destroy railways and bridges, on their retreat. It is apprehended that this was not in any way attributable to Bazaine.

Having now given an account, as fully as it is judged fit, of the period of the blockade, as well as the accusations made against the commanding general, the reader has to judge for himself and form his own opinion (1) as to the capacity, (2) as to the honesty of and duty to his country (*Patrie*) of the Marshal. It may, however, be well to mention that by the first rule of war in the "Laws of Nations" he was bound to give up the eagles (*without stating they were to be burnt*), viz.: "When forced by famine or arms to capitulate, the vanquished shall give up his arms and colours, in exchange for which the conqueror will maintain the prisoners, and restore them to freedom at the conclusion of the war, and signing of peace."

The German leaders during this campaign effected more than perhaps has ever been done or recorded in history in so short a space of time, and the most difficult to explain of all, is this short, successful blockade, and unconditional surrender, of the great Army of the Rhine and impregnable Metz.

Telegrams of King to Queen.

(1.) "Head-Quarters, *27th October.*

"*Official.*—This morning the Army of Bazaine has capitulated. 150,000 prisoners, 20,000 sick and wounded, have fallen into our hands. This afternoon the garrison will give up their arms.

"It is one of the most important events of this month. Gratitude to Providence. Wilhelm."

(2.) "Berlin, *28th October.*

"*Official.*—Last evening the capitulation of Metz was signed. Salvoes of artillery have been ordered in honour of it.

"The city and forts will be occupied the 29th, and not the 27th.

"The number of prisoners is augmented to 173,000 —3 marshals, 71 generals, and over 6000 officers."

Order of the Day of King William to his Troops.

"Versailles, *28th October.*

"Soldiers of the Allied German Armies,—When three months ago we entered on the campaign against an enemy who had provoked us to war, I expressed to you my confidence that God would protect our just cause.

"This confidence has not miscarried. Since the day of Weissenbourg, where we first met the enemy, till this day, when I receive the announcement of the capitulation of Metz, the names of the battles and fights have been graven deeply in the annals of military history.

"I remember the days of Wörth and Saarbrück, the bloody battles around Metz, Sedan, Beaumont, Strasbourg, Paris, and others. Each of these has been for us a victory. We shall remember this with the proud conscience that never has a war been more glorious.

"You are worthy of your glory! I tell it you with satisfaction! You have given proof of those virtues which adorn the soldier — the greatest courage in battle, perseverance, and self-devotion in times of great privation.

"By the capitulation of Metz the last of those armies of our enemies which menaced us at the commencement of the war, has succumbed. I seize this opportunity to express to you, one and all—generals, officers, and soldiers—my satisfaction and gratitude. I desire to honour you all in naming my son a Field-Marshal, as also General of Cavalry, Prince Frederick Karl of Prussia, who has so recently conducted you to victory.

"What is our fate in the future I await with calm, because I know that with such troops victory will not

fail us, and that we shall accomplish our work in future, as gloriously as we have done up to the present. WILHELM."

On his part the Red Prince issued a like order to the 1st and 2d armies; and so ended the great tragedy and misfortune for the French—the campaign of Metz and Sedan.

Paris, as we know, continued beleaguered for some time longer (to use Prince Bismarck's alleged expression, stewing in its own juice), till the capitulation, 28th January 1871.* Nearly superhuman efforts were made by M. Gambetta and others to raise and train men; but a weak general, fond of eternally scribbling, and not acting, an undisciplined body of troops, negligent and inexperienced officers, led to the several attempts to pierce the German lines being ineffectual, and no army of relief gaining Paris.

At Montretout and Champigny the fighting was terrible, but bad pontooning at the latter caused delay at the Marne, and all was lost. There were, it is true, some little successes in the south, by Garibaldi, and d'Aurelle de Paladine, who did not

* After having been bombarded from the south-east, and then the south ineffectually with 10,000 projectiles, which killed only 52 men, 24 women, and 31 children.

follow it up, and march direct on Paris. A few slight temporary successes by Faidherbe in the north,* and there was a masterly retreat made by De Chanzy of the Army of the Loire. We have before mentioned General de L'Admirault (the idol of the Army of the Rhine), and lastly Canrobert, who was called upon to do more than any other general, and who, left to act under a disadvantage, conducted his retreat in such good order on Metz.†

Paris was surrounded by an iron ring with the same ease as Metz, but had two spaces very weak indeed. Before very long the Germans got within range from the heights of Chatillon of the Pantheon, and destroyed a portion of that and St. Sulpice close by. Consequently the capitulation became only a question of time, and the armies sat down round the great city until it took place, peace after this bloody but short war being signed at Frankfort, 10th May 1871. France had been sleeping on her victories of the past since Solferino; Germany had been for sixty-four years working hard to efface Jena, and had succeeded.

* It is curious to read that Faidherbe (considering his small success) learnt his generalship at Senegal!

† Strasbourg made a fine defence, and Belfort a glorious one, remaining untaken.

CHAPTER XX.

Remarks on the Four Arms—Losses in battle—Geneva Convention and Red Cross Knights.

I HAVE called attention before, in a *résumé* of one of the battles, to the splendid manner in which scouting was done by the German, and the negligent (to say the least) by the French cavalry, and the greater force of the former, which was ever ready for its work. It seems to have been a great error on the part of many English reporters to have stated that the Uhlans (lancers) were the cavalry who so shone out in these difficult duties of reconnaissance. The rest of the German cavalry did its duty equally well and effectually, with the traditional Uhlan, as vouched for by the Germans.

Looking at the state of the cavalry of the two nations, it is to be observed that in France as in Germany it is the custom to attach a brigade of cavalry to each corps-d'armee, and to assemble besides in front of armies on the march a certain number of regiments of independent cavalry, who, accompanied by some batteries of horse artillery, scour the neighbourhood, clear the route, and get as near as possible to the enemy. An example may be given here.

When Prince Frederick Charles started from Metz towards the Loire to succour General von der Tann, he was preceded at about two days' march by great clouds of cavalry, forming a perfect curtain. Under shelter of this impassable line, the divisions were organised and grouped, extended right and left without any of their movements being divined by the Army of the Loire. Such was then, and such is still, the *rôle* to be played by independent cavalry. In Germany, where regiments of cavalry are generally brigaded together, there exists also three divisions of regularly constituted cavalry; those of the Prussian Guard, the 12th Saxon corps, and 15th corps Alsace-Lorraine. The division of the Guard is made up of three brigades of three regiments; the Saxon division, two brigades of three regiments; and the Alsace-Lorraine, two brigades of four regiments. All these regiments have in time of peace five squadrons each, with an effective of 143 men and 4 officers. On a war footing the squadron is only increased by 7 men to 150, which of course is insignificant; so we see that the mobilisation of these is nearly instantaneous, and so different to a frequent habit in England of turning volunteering lancers into hussars, and even heavies into mediums.

NOTE.—Drawing along the Franco-German frontier two zones, one of thirty, and one of eighty miles, we find in the first seven, in the second nine regiments of German cavalry, who, on declaration of war, would advance across the frontier, and fifteen regiments of French cavalry facing them.

When Colonel Chesney said that 30,000 cavalry could march across Europe and nearly conquer it, his plan was deemed practicable by some; and one writer having stated truly "that the secret of cavalry consists in its sudden action, surprise being the mother of miracles," goes on to say that with 800 horsemen Kellerman at Marengo changed defeat into victory, but no mention is made of the suddenly unmasked battery of fourteen guns of Marmont at the same time. No doubt that in all times, and even in the terrible charges in the Franco-German war, cavalry were of use in masses, and as Guibert says, "to turn flanks, as he says artillery is to troops what all flank works are to a fortification." Speaking now of the other arm, infantry, another writer, Colonel Knollys, has summed up in four texts: (1) That on our infantry will fall in future the greatest stress of the fighting (proved by losses in Franco-German war, 17.6 per cent.); (2) that the old British arm, the bayonet, will still be stained; (3) that Gatlings and mitrailleuses will frequently be more useful than cannon; and finally, (4) (as also says Colonel C. B. Brackenbury), that all positions without cover will in a few hours be entrenched. With regard to the immensely strong position of the French at Gravelotte, they declare it was all done in thirty hours, and entailed double their losses on the Germans (as it often does); and yet, strange to say, in the great

battle of Chicamanga, 20th September 1863, the strongly-entrenched Federals lost 16,000 men and the Confederates only 12,000 in the two days' fighting.

The general whose authority regarding the attack of entrenchments in our day is perhaps greatest, is "*Pick and Axe Sherman.*" The organisation of pioneers was an article of faith with him, and most of those great generals under him, as one may see by his operations between Chattanooga and Atlanta in the summer of 1864. Colonel Rogers says, that in assailing fortified lines Sherman always laid it down that "an army, to be efficient, must not settle down to one single mode of offence, but be prepared to act on any plan which promises success."

He gives the before mentioned improvised entrenching in the defence of Petersburg by the engineers, and men working under their guidance; for when Beauregard saw how critical was his position through Meade and his engineers skilfully effecting the passage of the Chickahominy and pontooning the James' river, he retired his wearied troops into a shorter position. They had no proper tools, but with their bayonets and split canteens they laboured all through the night and till noon next day, and so he was able to hold his position, and force Grant to set down for the reduction of Richmond by a regular siege. Even in the campaign of Napoleon in 1809,

before and after Aspern, one sees how much then depended on engineers, and yet at the present time there seem none of the armies of the other great powers so numerically deficient in real *flesh and blood* available engineers, and *so rich in paper ones*, as the British army.

General Comments on Campaigns and Losses.

Reviewing the great losses in these actions, although the slaughter at Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte (70,000) was so great, and more than has been known for many years, that is, since tactics have been so studied, still the losses, as compared to those of ancient times, were very much less.* In fact, experience teaches us that as the means of taking life increases, by reason of explosives, guns, and arms of precision generally, so, strange to say, the actual losses in battle seem to decrease. Going back to olden times, if we look to Biblical history, we find at once a tale of gigantic slaughter. The most sanguinary battle of all time was, when the Ten Tribes of Israel met those of Judah and Benjamin. Israel had 800,000 men, Judah and her ally 400,000, making 1,200,000. Israel lost 500,000 men killed, because in those times the wounded were all

* There was strategy, but little tactics in Cæsar's and Xenophon's time. Lord Beaconsfield had strategic talent for positions to be occupied, and Garibaldi was both a strategist and artillerist.

butchered. The victors here lost at least 100,000—total, 600,000, or 1 in every 2 of the combatants.

In the time of David the number of total fighting men reached 1,570,000; in fact, 1 in 4 of the entire male population was reckoned as a fighting man.

If this were the case with us at the present time, we should have 10,000,000 fighting men, and China (who could be made about our most powerful ally in the East against Russia) could raise at this rate a nice little army of 100,000,000.

At another period of Jewish history, the Benjamites, who were nearly annihilated, slew of the Israelites 45,000 in two days, and on the third day lost of their own 25,000; so that with small numbers, 70,000 perished in three days, or as many as at Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte of both sides combined.

Proceeding later on to the classical battles, we find the same gigantic slaughter.

At Marathon Greeks and Platæans numbered only 11,000, losing only 194 against 6400 Persians in four hours; and certainly makes one remember what Alexander once said when told that the Persian hosts were arriving, and that their arrows darkened the sun: "One butcher fears not many sheep" ("Analecta Græca Minora").

At the battle of Platæa it is computed that 9 out of 10 Persians were killed or wounded, or about 300,000.

The siege of Jerusalem by Titus entailed a loss

to the Jews of over 110,000 men; and Claudius is said, in a battle with the Goths, to have slain 300,000.

In the battle of Issus the Persians lost 70,000 men, under Darius.

At Cannæ the Roman loss was 44,000 out of 88,000.

Later on, at Angora, A.D. 1402, between Badajet I. and Tamerlane, a three days' battle entailed a loss of 340,000.

Between the great Genghis Khan and the Persians over 1,000,000 were engaged, and 160,000 killed. Later on,

At Bannockburn each Scot killed two men, that is to say, the English lost 50 per cent.

At Prestonpans 2500 Highlanders, without guns, destroyed and took prisoners 1850 out of 2000 English with 6 guns.

At Blenheim there were 12,000 killed, 14,000 wounded, and 14,000 prisoners = 40,000, of whom 1200 superior officers fell into the great Duke's hands, while the Allies only had 13,000 killed and wounded.

At the battle of Leipsig, the greatest of modern times, out of 400,000, 1 in every 5 perished = 80,000.

The fighting numbers at Gravelotte nearly came up to these numbers as engaged. Thirty-five thousand fell in the eight hours in place of the three

days, and adding to this 34,000 on the 16th, at Mars-la-Tour, in thirteen hours it runs the numbers up to nearly 70,000 in two days.

Waterloo was less sanguinary than many preceding it. Here the English only lost 6100, and with the Allies it was run up to 13,000. The Prussians lost 6232 themselves in four hours. In the four days the Allies lost 24,000, the French 27,000.

In the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, the average in all the regiments, excepting the 17th Lancers, was 45 to 48 casualties: and far more wounded than killed. In the 17th Lancers it was 73. The total 268, or not quite 1 casualty in 2 men engaged, nearly equal to the Todtenritt, August 16, 1870. Again, Michel's cavalry brigade at Woerth was nearly annihilated, so was Marguerite's at Sedan.

During the terrible cavalry combats at Mars-la-Tour the Germans lost more in killed than the French, owing to the latter giving the point more than the cut, so rendering the wound mortal.

When the Prussian Guards were thrown back in their attempted advance from St. Marie on St. Privat at 5 P.M., it is estimated that the French were firing about eight rounds per minute, and nearly two-thirds of those who advanced were put "*hors de combat:*" thousands fell in ten minutes. About the same average of casualties took place, perhaps even a

little more, in the advance in the south from the ravine up to take the heights of St. Hubert and Moscou.

In the war between North and South in the United States, the 15th Indiana regiment, assaulting Missionary Ridge, and belonging to Sheridan's division, lost 202 officers and men out of 337 in forty-five minutes, but it just got to and took the crest of the hill. At Gettysburg, Pickett lost 2000 men, out of 4900, in thirty-five minutes, carrying out Lee's order.

The lesser modern losses, in spite of the improvement in weapons, is explained thus :—

In the olden times masses of men, with the only weapons of destruction, arrows, swords, and pikes, were hurled at each other, and the weaker and less brave were butchered. Now the Art of war, learnt by the officers, who are the chief winners of battles, has put an end to this,* and if well led it is found that all European, and even some savage nations furnish men equally brave. The great thing now seems to be for a talented general during an action to get his enemy into a fire-swept space and so destroy him, and it also seems that when losses in

* There fell in the entire war of 1870–71, on the German side, 5342 officers, 12,238 non-commissioned officers, 110,435 soldiers—total, 128,015. Proportion of each arm was—infantry, 17.6 ; cavalry, 6.3 ; artillery, 6.5 ; engineers, 2.8 ; train, 0.3. The French returns cannot be relied on.

falling men arrive at between two-thirds and three-fourths (which may be exceeded in a small forlorn hope slightly) the men will *no longer follow.*

Battles, as the reader knows, are becoming affairs of greater distances, as the range of firearms increases. Dominant positions are sought by generals; and, lastly, one must not forget that in a campaign of any duration surgical aid now tends much to ultimate success.

In earlier times thousands of men were left to die of their wounds and unskilfully treated, even if not despatched. Now a Lister has taught European nations how to save numbers of the wounded, and, keeping away the most fatal after effects, bringing back to the ranks speedily, many who would have been quite disabled.

Much has been said of the splendid medical aid of the Germans as compared sometimes with ourselves, yet after Metz there was only one surgeon in the villages to every 170 sick.

Finally, the Geneva Convention is a holy thing. "*Chapeaux bas,*" civilians—salute it, soldiers, as you pass the flag, for it covers the brave and glorious, and —but only temporarily—the Red Cross Knights, who are ever doing their duty to their country and repairing the temple of God.* It is respected by all great

* Eighty-eight surgeons fell on the *German side alone* during the war.

generals, in the foremost rank of whom stood the Crown Prince of Prussia in the war of 1870.

"A woman by the side of the sick and wounded,
A Hohenzollern in the field."

Honour then to those who proposed and who carry out the Convention. "*Honneur et Patrie*" may be well applied to the Red Cross Knight,* for—

"When on their narrow beds are laid
The ghastly relics war has made,
Or when above the crowded camp,
Like vapours o'er a deadly swamp,
Hovers disease on vulture pinion,
And pallid sickness holds dominion;
There, or upon the battle plain,
Those watchers by the bed of pain,
The kindly soothers of distress,
Surgeons and sisters laurelless,
Strive long and ardently to save,
And of its victims rob the grave.
But when our God in brighter skies,
Shall wipe the teardrops from all eyes,
When War her bloodstained flag has furled,
Who knoweth in that better world
Whether the wreath of laurel green
Shall on the warrior's brow be seen?
But surely on their brows who fell
Uncrowned on earth, though fighting well,
Shall twine bright wreaths of asphodel."

—Willis.

* At Sedan, Drs. Philip Frank, M'Cormack, Lady Agnes Campbell, Sisters M'Laughlin, Pearson, and others, worked night and day as Red Cross Knights and Ladies; and at Champigny, Surgeon-General C. A. Gordon, C.B.

CHAPTER XXI.

Causes of the French disasters—Concluding remarks.

EVERY one remembers having read of the patriotism of 1792, at least among the educated; but it is in vain that one seeks to re-open this in the bosom of French conscripts, and uneducated, ignorant, and vulgar. This sentiment, if it is not born in a person, is developed by the study of history, by manners and customs, by noticing the political situation of other peoples. The French army in its composition will never fulfil all these conditions. Doubtless, in 1792, education was less general in France than it is to-day; and the patriotism which animated its armies was not derived from the above studies, but it was inspired by a great idea, that the ignorant class as well as the most intelligent citizens shared without altogether understanding it. To-day it is quite different; far from being actuated by a general feeling, the patriotism in France seems gradually becoming extinguished in the dissensions which

divide the country and tear it, and there seems to be inherited at birth in the soul of the soldier that spirit which leads to a want of discipline and of independence, and which during a campaign drags him to commit acts of pillage, and to the forgetting of respect which he owes to his officers.

How can it be different when even in the clubs and in the public assemblies one sees instigators of disorder pushing on the soldiers to disobedience, and making them show a contempt for authority? and especially when one proclaims even from the Tribune of the Legislative Assembly that, in the century in which we live, it is treating a man with barbarity to put him in a police cell, or send him to prison. All this does not rest without an echo in the breasts of soldiers, too ready to seize anything that may favour their proclivities. How can one be astonished to hear that they have set authority at defiance, despised the law, not respected the property of citizens, and even so far forgotten their duty as to pillage convoys under the eyes of their chiefs, unworthy and powerless to arrest them? or that some of these soldiers, in the course of a battle, heedless of the voice of their chiefs, have escaped from them and taken to flight before the danger which menaced them? In fact, if we can believe certain confessions, it is to avoid the return of past manifestations that some generals have been arrested in their course of rigour

which would have been salutary, without thinking that their feebleness would change into a culpable tolerance, and forgetting that it was by the capital executions of Dumouriez he established order in his army, and that Davoust (the Prince of Eckmühl) knew how to maintain in his the severe discipline which conducted everywhere his troops to victory.

Thus leaving out any remarks relative to the worn out and frivolous government, which will be eternally responsible, the reverses of the campaign of 1870 appear to have been due to three principal causes:—

(1.) The weakness of the generals-in-chief.

(2.) The inferiority, numerically, of the army, as also its defective composition and intendance.

(3.) The want of discipline in the soldiery.

The first cause may gradually disappear; the generals, learning through the above misfortunes their responsibilities, may neglect nothing which can make them worthy of the commands which are confided to them. And who knows but that a man of great genius may rise to the surface and bring back to France all her past grandeur and glory?

The second can only be changed by wise laws and showing the importance of France's great sacrifices, the imminence of her perils, and the power of her enemies.

With regard to the third it is to be feared that this

is the most difficult to triumph over. Want of discipline has existed a long time, and got into the ranks. It is not altogether the fruit of want of coercive measures, of tolerance, and thoughtlessness of officers, and familiarity, which they frequently permit in mixing with their subordinates, but it is also the result of the kind of times in which we live. The ideas of equality of the Revolution are unnatural. It is not a system of equality which should exist between all citizens; but one sees equality thrust forward on every occasion, as if in a society it were possible to do away with that inevitable distinction which divides always the members of which it is composed; as if language, manners, education, character, could all be the same in each individual, and without considering the abyss which separates them. The most immoral, the most abject, the most ignorant, wish to be the equals of the most virtuous, the most noble, the most enlightened of citizens; and as a consequence of this equality, one recommends the partition of property, which intelligence and labour have not always acquired. This Utopian idea has penetrated into the spirit of French soldiers, some of whom to-day see no difference between them and their officers; and if they do not absolutely disobey, yet they comment on, they discuss, they examine their acts and orders, without considering the passive submission which

is in other armies the first of their duties.* The fatal tendencies to insubordination which have been undermining the French army to its base, and which in olden times, submitted to by the Cæsars, was one of the causes which contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire, and is the work of false doctrines; and in order to preserve the French spirit of discipline from contagion, it is necessary, by changing the character of revolution, to turn the terror of 1790–93 against the demagogue, and absolutely crush his subversive ideas.

But, alas! what will be the consequence of France's disasters? Will she be able to overcome entirely the onerous conditions she has had to accept, or like the peoples of antiquity has she in her turn ended her mission of tutelary greatness? and is she to-day to fall beneath the blows of another dominating power? In following the course of civilisation in the world, this last hypothesis does not appear improbable. Advancing unceasingly from east and south to north and west, have we not seen the collapse of power in the Egyptians, the Assyrians,

* A French general of experience says of the French soldier: "His officer must smile often, laugh seldom, and never on duty. Naturally insubordinate, he soon becomes undisciplined, if his orders are not discreet, intelligent, and given with calmness; fond of rest, he will work hard if his labour is properly arranged, and if praised for its result. One must for ever be acting on his moral, and give him confidence. He wants interest in himself, his food, his native province to be shown by his officer. The soldier wants and appreciates *paternal*, never *maternal* care!"

the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, during a period of 1200 years. French power, more brilliant, has shone during 1500, and if one can judge of future peoples by those who have now passed away, we are brought to a fatal conclusion that France may possibly have to yield to the Prussian, the Muscovite, and other powers, younger, stronger, and less enervated by civilisation.

But hope must not depart from France. Oh, no! One may weaken her, humiliate her, and tear from her military preponderance (although Shakspere has said that "France is the soldier of God upon earth").* True! she has been conquered, but her genius will survive all her misfortunes; and with her attention given to industry and commerce, applying herself unceasingly to science, letters, and the arts, these will render her grand and flourishing among nations. Let the parties who ferment and tear her, unite in common accord. Let those who govern her renounce that aggressive policy which may alienate her from the sympathies of Europe; then, having for ambition the development of her internal prosperity, France will always carry aloft that brilliant torch which has for so many centuries illumined the world. For, speaking of history, has not her great

* "France, whose armour conscience buckled on;
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
As God's own soldier."—*King John.* Act ii. scene 2.
(Last speech of the Bastard.)

poet, so often misjudged, and who has lately gone to his rest, said—

"Elle apporte une palme au héros qui succombe,
Du char des conquérants brisant le frêle essieu,
Marche en rêvant au bruit des empires qui tombent,
Et dans tous les chemins montre les pas de Dieu."

—VICTOR HUGO.

THE END.

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